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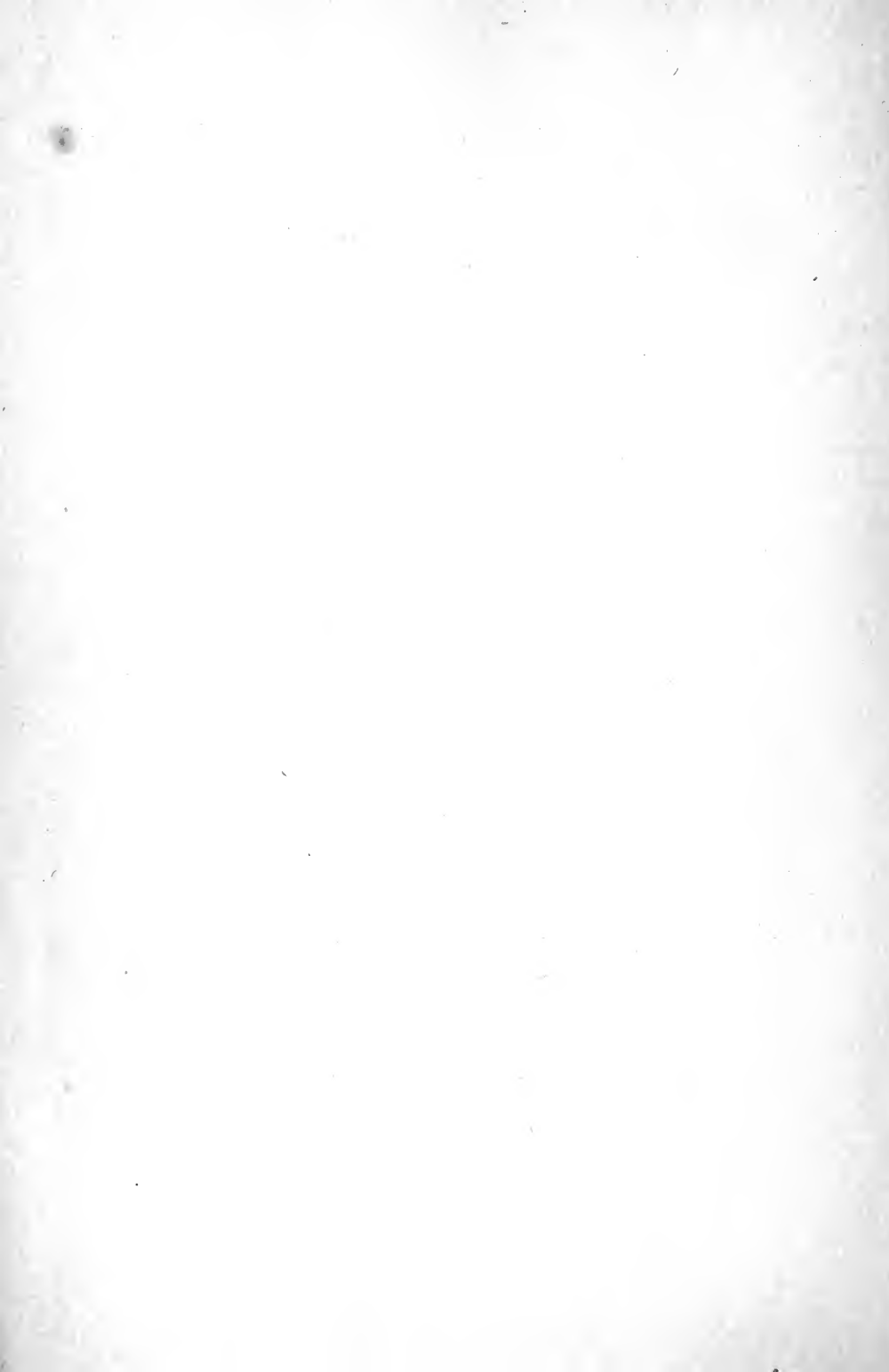


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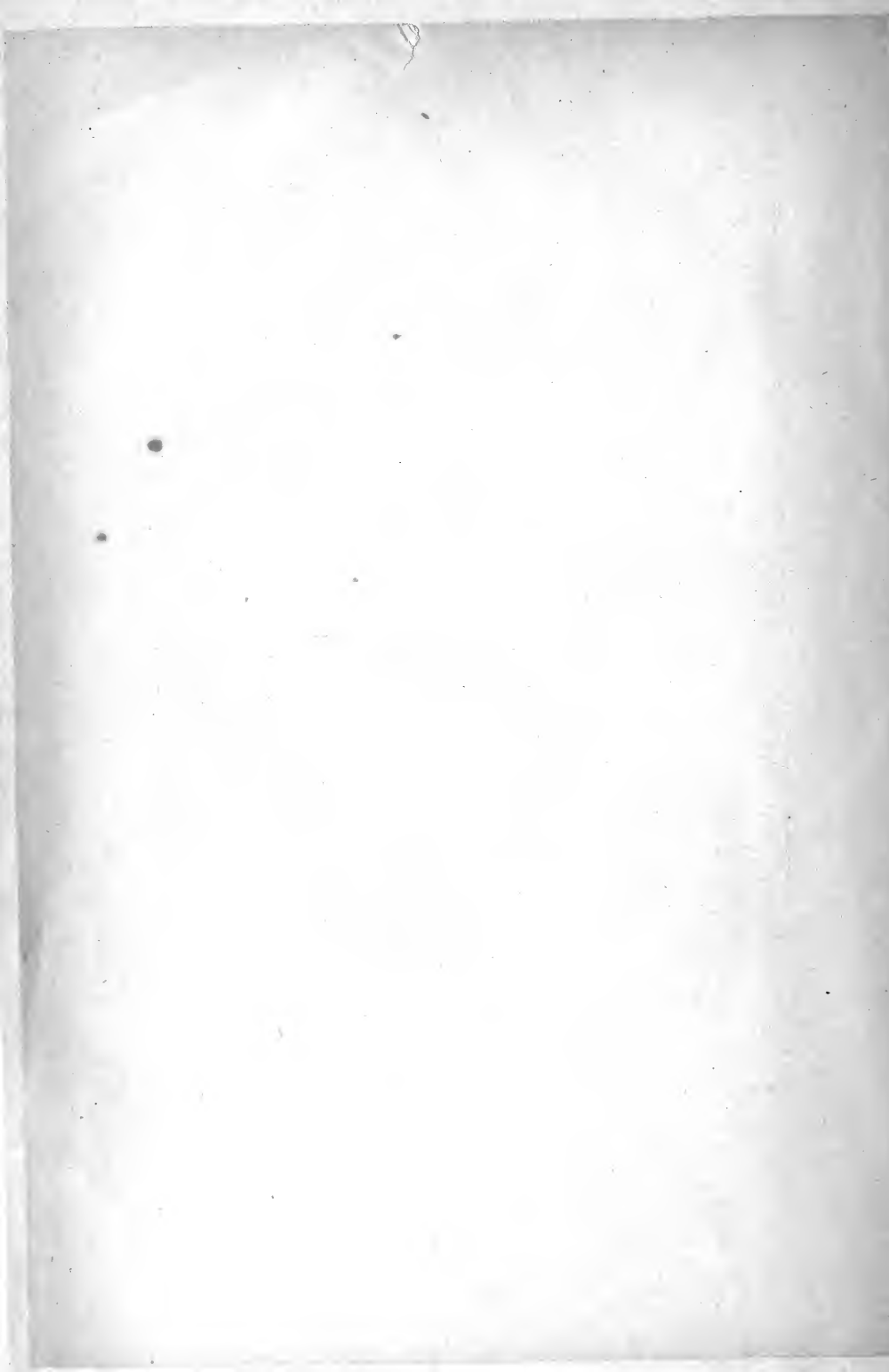




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Taking off his hat.



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The Course of True Love Never Did
Run Smooth, A Hero and a
Martyr, The Jilt, *AND* The His-
tory of an Acre. *BY CHARLES*
READE

PRINTED FOR
THE GROLIER SOCIETY
PARIS BOSTON

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THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH.

I.

CLOUDS AND SUNSHINE.

CHAPTER I.

IT is the London season: come into the country! It is hot, and dusty, and muddy here; and this opening of all the drains, which is to bridle all the disorders by and by, poisons us dead meanwhile, O Board of Health! Come into the country!

In Oxfordshire, about two miles from the Thames, and on the skirts of the beech forest that lies between Wallingford and Henley, stands an irregular farmhouse; it looks like two houses forced to pass for one; for one part of it is all gables, and tile, and chimney corners, and antiquity; the other is square, slated, and of the newest cut outside and in. The whole occupies one entire side of its own farmyard, being separated from the straw only by a small rubicon of gravel and a green railing; though at its back, out of the general view, is a pretty garden.

In this farmhouse and its neighborhood the events of my humble story passed a very few years ago.

Mrs. Mayfield, proprietor of the farm, had built the new part of the house for herself, though she did little more than sleep in it. In the antique part lived her cousin, old farmer Hathorn, with his wife and his son Robert. Hathorn was himself proprietor of a little land two miles off, but farmed Mrs. Mayfield's acres upon some friendly agreement, which they contrived to understand, but few else could, least of all a shrewd lawyer.

The truth is, the inmates, like the house, were a little behind their age: they had no relations that were not contained within these four walls, and the feeling and tie of blood was very strong between them all.

The Hathorns had one son, Robert, a character; he was silent, and passed with some for sulky; but he was not sulky, only reserved and thoughtful; he was, perhaps, a little more devoid of all levity than becomes a young man. He had great force and weight of character; you might see that in his brow and his steady manner free from flourishes. With the Hathorns lived Mr. Casenower, a retired London tradesman. This gentleman had been bought out of a London firm for his scientific way of viewing things: they had lost such lots of money by it.

He had come to the Hathorns for a month, and had now been with them a year, with no intention on either side of parting yet awhile. This good accord did not prevent a perpetual strife of opinions between Casenower and old Hathorn. Casenower, the science-bitten, had read all the books chemists wrote on agriculture, and permitted himself to believe every word. Hathorn read nothing on agriculture but the sheep, the soil, the markets, and the clouds, etc., and sometimes read them wrong, but not so very often.

Rose Mayfield was a young widow, fresh, free, high-

spirited, and jovial; she was fond of company, and its life and soul wherever she was. She loved flirtation, and she loved work; and when she could not combine them she would take them by turns; she would leave the farm every now and then, go to a friend at Oxford, Reading, or Abingdon, and flirt like wild-fire for a fortnight; then she would return to the farm, and men, boys, horses, and work would seem to go more lively before she had been back an hour.

Mrs. Mayfield was a grazier. Though she abandoned her arable land to her cousin's care, she divided with him her grass acres, and bred cattle, and churned butter, and made cheeses, and showed a working arm bare till dinner-time (one o'clock) six days in the week.

This little farmhouse then held a healthy, happy party; but one was not quite content. Parents are matrimonial schemers; they cannot help it; it's no use talking. Old Hathorn wanted Rose Mayfield to marry his son Robert, and so make all sure. The farmer was too wise to be always tormenting the pair to come together, but he secretly worked towards that end without being seen through by them.

Their ages were much the same; and finer specimens of rustic stature and beauty in either sex were not to be seen for miles. But their dispositions were so different that when upon a kind word or a civility passing between them, old Hathorn used to look at Mrs. Hathorn, Mrs. Hathorn used to shake her head, as much as to say, "May be, but I doubt it."

One thing the farmer built on was this: that though Mrs. Mayfield was a coquette, none of her beaux followed her to the farm. "She won't have them here," argued Hathorn, "and that shows she has a respect for Robert at bottom."

The good farmer's security was shaken by a little cir-

cumstance. Bix Farm, that lay but a mile from our ground, was to let, and in course of time was taken by a stranger from Berkshire. Coming into a farm is a business of several months; but the new tenant, a gay, dashing young fellow, came one day to look over his new farm; and, to Hathorn's surprise, called on him, and inquired for Mrs. Mayfield. At sight of the new-comer, that lady colored up to the eyes, and introduced him to her cousin as Mr. Hickman. The name, coupled with her manner, struck Hathorn, but he said nothing to Rose. He asked his wife who this Hickman was. "He is a stranger to me," was the reply, "ask Rose; I hear he was her beau out Abingdon way."

Here was a new feature. The good farmer became very uneasy; but country folks have plenty of tact. He said little—he only warned Robert, who did not seem dismayed by the intelligence, and held himself on his guard.

That same evening the whole family party were seated together towards sundown, in Hathorn's dining-room—the farmer smoking a clay pipe, Mrs. Hathorn sewing, Mrs. Mayfield going in and out making business; but Robert was painfully reading some old deeds he had got from Mrs. Mayfield the week before. This had been the young man's occupation for several evenings, and Mrs. Mayfield had shrugged her shoulders at him and his deeds more than once.

On the present occasion, finding the room silent and reposeful, a state of things she abhorred, she said to Mrs. Hathorn, in a confidential whisper, so bell-like that they all heard it, as she meant them, "Has your Robert any thoughts of turning lawyer at present?"

The question was put so demurely that the old people smiled and did not answer, but looked towards Robert to answer. The said Robert smiled, and went on studying the parchment.

"He doesn't make us much the wiser, though; does he?" continued Mrs. Mayfield. "Silence!" cried the tormentor, the next moment, "he is going to say something. He is only waiting till the sun goes down."

"He is only waiting till he has got something to say," replied Robert, in his quiet way.

"Ah!" was the reply; "that is a trick you have got. I say, Jane, if I was to wait for that, what would become of the house?"

"It would not be so gay as it is, I dare say, Rose."

"And that would be a pity, you know. Well, Bob, when do you look to have something to say? to-morrow night—if the weather holds?"

"I think I shall have something to say as soon as I have read this through." He examined the last leaf—then laid it down. "I have something to say."

Mrs. Hathorn laid down her work.

"Cousin Mayfield," said Robert, "what do you think of Drayton Farm?"

Cousin Mayfield, who had been all expectation, burst into a fit of laughter that rang through the room like a little peal of bells. Mrs. Hathorn looked vexed, and Robert colored for a moment; but he resumed coolly: "Why, it is two hundred acres, mostly good soil, and it marches with your up-hill land. Squire Phillips, that has just got it, counts it the cream of his estate."

"And what have I to do with Squire Phillips and Drayton?"

"Why, this, Rose. I think Drayton belongs to you."

"Nonsense—is the boy mad? Why, Squire Phillips got it along with Hurley, and Norton, and all the Lydalls' farms. Of course they are all mine by right of blood, if every one had their own; but they were all willed away from us fifty years ago. Who doesn't know that? No; Squire Phillips is rooted there too fast for us to take him up."

"It does not belong to Squire Phillips," was the cool reply.

"To whom, then?"

"To you, Rose; or if not to you, to father yonder—but, unless I am much mistaken, it belongs to you. I am no great discourser," continued Robert; "so I have written it down to the best of my ability here. I wish you would look at this paper, and you might read it over to father and mother, if you will be so good: I am going my rounds"—and out strolled Mr. Robert, to see that every cow was foddered, and every pig had his share of the trough.

Mrs. Mayfield took Robert's paper, and read what he had written—some score of little dry sentences, each of them a link in a chain of fact—and this was the general result. Fifty years ago Mrs. Mayfield's father's father had broken off all connection with his son, and driven him out of his house and disinherited him, and adopted in his stead the father of Squire Phillips. The disinherited, being supplied with money by his mother, had got on in the world, and consoled himself for the loss of his father's farms by buying one or two of his own. He died before his father, and bequeathed all he possessed to his daughter Rose. At last the old fellow died at an immense age, and under his will Squire Phillips took all his little estates: but here came in Robert's discovery. Of those four little estates, one had come into the old fellow's hands from his wife's father, and through his wife, and a strict settlement, drawn so long ago that all except the old fellow who meant to cheat it, had forgotten it, secured the Drayton estate, after his parents' death, to Rose Mayfield's father, who by his will had unconsciously transferred it to Rose.

This, which looks clear, had been patiently disen-

tangled from a mass of idle words by Robert Hathorn, and the family began to fall gradually into his opinion. The result was, Mrs. Mayfield went to law with Squire Phillips, and the old farmer's hopes revived; for he thought, and with reason, that all this must be another link between Robert and Rose—and so the months glided on. The fate of Drayton was soon to be tried at the assizes. Mr. Hickman came over now and then, preparatory to settling on Bix. Mrs. Mayfield made no secret that she found him "very good company" — that was her phrase — and he courted her openly. Another month brought the great event of the agricultural year, "the harvest." This part of Oxfordshire can seldom get in its harvest without the assistance of some strange hands, and Robert agreed with three Irishmen and two Hampshire lads the afternoon before the wheat harvest. "With these and our own people we shall do well enough, father," said he.

Just before the sun set, Mrs. Hathorn was seated outside her own door with her work, when two people came through the farmyard to speak to her: a young woman and a very old man. The former stood a little in the rear; and the old man came up to Mrs. Hathorn, and, taking off his hat, begged for employment in the fields.

"Our number is made up, old man," was the answer.

The old man's head drooped; but he found courage to say, "One more or less won't matter much to you, and it is the bread of life to us."

"Poor old man," said Mrs. Hathorn, "you are too old for harvest work, I doubt."

"No such thing, dame," said the old man, testily.

"What is it, mother?" cried Robert from the barn.

"An old man and his daughter come for harvest work. They beg hard for it, Robert."

"Give them their supper, mother, and let them go."

"I will, Robert; no doubt the poor things are hungry and weary and all;" and she put down her work to go to the kitchen, but the old man stopped her.

"We are here for work, not for charity," said he; "and won't take anything we don't earn."

Mrs. Hathorn looked surprised, and a little affronted. The girl stepped nearer.

"No need to speak so sharp, grandfather," said she, in a clear, cold, but winning voice; "charity is not so common. We thank you, dame. He is an old soldier, and prouder than becomes the like of us. Good-even, and good luck to your harvest!"

They turned to go.

"Stop, girl!" said Mrs. Hathorn. "Robert," cried she, "I wish you would come here."

Robert put on his coat and came up.

"It is an old soldier, Robert; and they seem decent folk, the pair of them."

"An old soldier?" said Robert, looking with some interest at the old man, who, though stiff in the joints, was very erect.

"Ay, young man," said the other boldly, "when I was your age I fought for the land; and now, you see, I must not work upon it!"

Robert looked at his mother.

"Come, Robert," said she, "we may all live to be old, if it pleases God."

"Well," said Robert, "it seems hard to refuse an old soldier; but he is very old, and the young woman looks delicate; I am sure I don't know how to bargain with them."

"Count our two sickles as one, sir," said the girl calmly.

"So be it," said Robert; "anyway, we will give you a trial:" and he returned to his work. And Corporal

Patrick, for that was the old soldier's name, no longer refused the homely supper that was offered him, since he could work it out in the morning.

The next morning at six o'clock the men and women were all in the wheat: Robert Hathorn at the head of them, for Robert was one of the best reapers in the country-side.

Many a sly jest passed at the expense of Patrick and his granddaughter Rachael. The old man often answered, but Rachael hardly ever. At the close of the day they drew apart from all the rest, and seemed content when they were alone together.

In the course of a day or two the reapers began to observe that Rachael was very handsome; and then she became the object of much coarse admiration. Rachael was as little affected by this as by their satire. She evaded it with a cold contempt which left little more to be said; and then her rustic admirers took part with the women against her.

Rachael was pale, and perhaps this was one reason why her beauty did not strike the eye all at once; but when you came to know her face, she was beautiful. Her long eyelashes were heavenly; her eye was full of soul; her features were refined, and her skin was white and transparent, and a slight blush came readily to it, at which moment she was lovely. It must be owned she did not appear to advantage in the field among the reapers; for there she seemed to feel at war; and her natural dignity degenerated into a certain doggedness. After awhile Mrs. Hathorn took a fancy to her; and when she was beside this good, motherly creature, her asperity seemed to soften down, and her coldness turned to a not unamiable pensiveness.

Mrs. Hathorn said one evening to Robert, "Robert, look at that girl. Do try and find out what is the mat-

ter with her. She is a good girl as ever broke bread; but she breaks my heart to look at her, she is like a marble statue. It is not natural at her years to be so reserved."

"Oh," answered Robert, "let her alone, there are talkers enough in the world. She is a modest girl — the only one in the field, I should say, and that is a great ornament to all women, if they would but see it."

"Well, Robert, at all events, have your eye on them; they are strangers, and the people about here are vulgar behaved to strangers, you know."

"I'll take care; and as for Rachael, she knows how to answer the fools — I noticed that the first day."

Sunday evening came; the villagers formed in groups about the ale-house, the stocks, and the other points of resort, and their occasional laughter fell discordantly upon the ear, so holy and tranquil seemed the air and the sky. Robert Hathorn strolled out at the back of the house to drink the sabbath sunset after a week of toil: at the back of the largest barn was a shed, and from this shed as he drew near to it there issued sounds that seemed to him as sweetly in unison with that holy sunset as the villagers' rude mirth was out of tune. He came to the back of the shed, and it was Rachael reading the Bible aloud to her grandfather. The words were golden, and fell like dew upon all the spirits within their reach — upon Robert, who listened to them unseen; upon Patrick, whose testy nature was calmed and soothed, and upon Rachael herself, who seemed at this moment more hopeful, and less determined to shrink within herself. Her voice, always sweet and winning, became richer and mellower as she read; and when she closed the book, she said with a modest fervor one would hardly have suspected her of, "Blessed be God for this book, grandfather! I do think it is the best thing of all the

good things He has given the world, and it is very encouraging to people of low condition like us."

"Ay," said the old man, "those were bold words you read just now, 'Blessed are the poor.'"

"Let us take them to heart, old man, since, strange as they sound, they must be true."

Corporal Patrick pondered awhile in silence, then said he was weary: "Let us bless the good people, whose bread we have eaten this while, and I will go to sleep. Rachael, my child, if it was not for you, I could wish not to wake again."

Poor old man, he was a-weary; he had seen better days, and fourscore years is a great age, and he had been a soldier, and fought in great battles head erect, and now, in his feeble days, it was hard to have to bow the back and bend over the sickle among boys and girls who jeered him, and whose peaceful grandsires he had defended against England's enemies.

Corporal Patrick and his granddaughter went into the barn to sleep, as heretofore, on the straw. Robert Hathorn paced thoughtfully home, and about half an hour after this a cowboy came into the barn to tell Corporal Patrick there were two truckle-beds at his service in a certain loft, which he undertook to show him. So the old soldier and Rachael bivouacked no longer in the barn.

"Who sent you?" said Rachael to the boy.

"Mistress."

After this Robert Hathorn paid considerable attention both to Patrick and Rachael, and she showed by degrees that she was not quite ice to a man that could respect her; not that her manner was inviting even to him, but at least it was courteous, and once or twice she even smiled on him, and a beautiful smile it was when it did come; and whether from its beauty or its rarity made a great impression on all who saw it.

It was a fine harvest time upon the whole, and with some interruptions the work went merrily on; the two strangers, in spite of hard labor, improved in appearance. Mrs. Hathorn set this down to the plentiful and nourishing meals which issued twice a day from her kitchen, and as they had always been her favorites, she drew Robert's attention to the bloom that began to spread over Rachael's cheek, and the old soldier's brightening eye, as her work in a great measure.

Mrs. Mayfield was away, and during her absence Hickman had not come once to visit his farm or Hathorn's. This looked ugly.

"Wife," said the farmer one day, "what makes our Robert so moody of late?"

"Oh, you have noticed it, have you? Then I am right; the boy has something on his mind."

"That is easy to be seen, and I think I know what it is."

"Do you, John? what?"

"Why, he sees this Hickman is in a fair way to carry off Rose Mayfield."

"It is not that."

"Why, what else can it be?"

"It is a wonder to me," said Mrs. Hathorn, "that a man shouldn't know his own son better than you seem to know Robert. They are very good friends; but what makes you think Robert would marry her? have you forgotten how strict he is about women? Why did he part with Lucy Blackwood, the only sweetheart he ever had?"

"Hanged if I remember!"

"Because she got herself spoken of, flirting at Oxford races once in a way; and Rose does mostly nothing else. And they do say, that once or twice since her husband died, ahem!" —

"She has kicked over the traces altogether? Fiddlestick!"

"Fiddlestick be it! She is a fine, spirity woman, and such are apt to set folks talking more than they can prove. Well, Robert wouldn't marry a woman that made folk talk about her."

"Oh, he is not such a fool as to fling the farm to a stranger. When does Rose come home?"

"Next week, as soon as the assizes are over, and the Drayton cause settled one way or other."

"Well, when she comes back you will see him clear up directly, and then I shall know what to do. They must come together, and they shall come together; and if there is no other way, I know one that will bring them together, and I'll work that way if I'm hanged for it."

"With all my heart!" said Mrs. Hathorn calmly: "you can but try."

"I *will* try all I know."

Will it be believed, that while he was in this state of uneasiness about his favorite project, Mr. Casenower came and invited him to a friendly conference, announced to him that he admired Mrs. Mayfield beyond measure and had some reason to think she was not averse to him, and requested the farmer's co-operation?

"Confound the jade!" thought Hathorn, "she has been spreading the net for this one too then: she will break my heart before I have done with her."

He answered demurely, "that he did not understand women; that his mind was just now in the harvest; and he hoped Mr. C. would excuse him, and try his luck himself—along with the rest," said the old boy rather bitterly.

The harvest drew toward its close; the barns began to burst with the golden crops, and one fair rick after

another rose behind them like a rear-guard, until one fine burning-hot day in September there remained nothing but a small barley-field to carry.

In the house Mrs. Hathorn and the servants were busy preparing the harvest-home dinner; in the farmyard Casenower and old Hathorn were arguing a point of husbandry; the warm haze of a September day was over the fields; the little pigs toddled about contentedly in the straw of the farmyard, rooting here and grunting there; the pigeons sat upon the barn tiles in flocks, and every now and then one would come shooting down, and settle with flapping wings upon a bit of straw six inches higher than the level; and ever and anon was heard the thunder of the horses' feet as they came over the oak floor of a barn, drawing a loaded wagon into it.

Suddenly a halloo was heard down the road; Mr. Casenower and Hathorn looked over the wall, and it was Mrs. Mayfield's boy Tom, riding home full pelt and hurraing as he came along.

"We have won the day, farmer," shouted he; "you may dine at Drayton if you wool. La bless you! the judge wouldn't hear a word again us. Hurrah! here comes the mistress; hurrah!" And sure enough Mrs. Mayfield was seen in her hat and habit, riding her bay mare up at a hand gallop on the grass by the roadside. Up she came; the two men waved their hats to her, which salute she returned on the spot, in the middle of a great shy which her mare made as a matter of course; but before they could speak she stopped their mouths. "Where is Robert? not a word till he is by. I have not forgot to whom I owe it." She sprang from the saddle, and gave a hand to each of the men; but before they could welcome her, or congratulate her, she had the word again. "Why, of course you are; you are going to tell me you have been as dull as ditch-water since I

went, as if I didn't know that; and as for Drayton, we will all go there together in the afternoon, and I'll kiss your Robert then and there; and then he will faint away, and we'll come home in the cool of the evening. Is barley cart done yet?"

"No, you are just in time; they are in the last field.

"Well, I must run in and cuddle Jane, and help them on with dinner a bit."

"Ay, do, Rose; put a little life into them."

In about ten minutes Mrs. Mayfield joined them again; and old Hathorn, who had spent that period in a brown study, began operations upon her like a cautious general as he was.

His first step might be compared to reconnoitring the ground; and here, if any reader of mine imagines that country people are simple and devoid of art, for Heaven's sake resign that notion, which is entirely founded on pastorals written in metropolitan garrets.

Country people look simple; but that is a part of their profound art. They are the square-nosed sharks of *terra firma*. Their craft is smooth, plausible, and unfathomable. You don't believe me, perhaps. Well, then, my sharp cockney, go live and do business in the country, and tell me at the year's end whether you have not found humble unknown practitioners of Humbug, Flattery, Over-reaching, and Manœuvre, to whom Thieves' Inn London might go to school.

We hear much from such as write with the but-end of their grandfather's flageolet, about simple swains and downy meads: but when you get there the natives are at least as downy as any part of the concern.

"I thought you would be home to-day, Rose."

"Did you? Why?"

"Because Richard Hickman has been here twice this morning."

"Richard Hickman? what was his business here?"

"Well, they do say you and he are to go to church together one of these days — the pair of you."

"Well, if the pair of us go to church there will be a pair of weddings that day."

"How smooth a lie do come off a woman's tongue, to be sure!" thought Mr. Hathorn.

Mr. Casenower put in his word. "I trust I shall not offend you by my zeal, madam, but I hope to see you married to a better man than Hickman."

"With all my heart, Mr. Cas—hem! You find me a better man, and I won't make two bites at him — ha! ha! ha!"

"He bears an indifferent character — ask the farmer here."

"Oh," said the farmer, with an ostentation of candor, "I don't believe all I hear."

"I don't believe half, nor a quarter," said Mrs. M.; "but, for Heaven's sake, don't fancy I am wrapped up in Richard Hickman, or in any other man: but he is as good company as here and there one, and he has a tidy farm nigh hand, and good land of his own out Newbury way, by all accounts."

"Good land!" shouted the farmer: "did you ever see it?"

"Not I."

"Rose," said Hathorn solemnly (he had never seen it either), "it is as poor as death! covered with those long docks, I hear, and that is a sure sign of land with no heart in it, just as a thistle is a good sign. Do your books tell you that?" said he, suddenly turning to Casenower.

"No," said that gentleman with incredulous contempt.

"And it is badly farmed; no wonder, when the farmer never goes nigh it himself, trusts all to a sort of

bailiff. Mind your eye, Rose. Why does he never go there? tell me that."

"Well, you know, of course he tells me he left it out of regard for me."

"Haw, haw, haw! why, he has known you but six months, and he has not lived at home this five years. What do you think of it, Mr. Casenower? Mind your eye, Rose."

"I mean to," said Rose; and if you had seen the world of suppressed fun and peeping observation in the said eye, you would have felt how capable it was of minding itself, and of piercing like a gimlet even through a rustic Machiavel.

Mr. Casenower whispered to Hathorn, "Put in a word for me." He then marched up to Rose, and taking her hand, said with a sepulchral tenderness, at which Rose's eyes literally danced in her head, "Know your own value, dear Mrs. Mayfield, and do not throw yourself away on an unworthy object." He then gave Hathorn a slight wink and disappeared, leaving his cause in that simple rustic's hands.

"It is all very fine, but if I am to wait for a man without a fault, I shall die an old — fool."

"That is not to be thought of," said Hathorn smoothly; "but what you want is a fine steady young man — like my Robert, now."

"So you have told me once or twice of late," said the lady archly. "Robert is a good lad, and pleases my eye well enough for that matter; but he has a fault that wouldn't suit me, nor any woman, I should think, without she was a fool."

"Why, what is wrong about the boy?"

"The boy looks sharper after women than women will bear. He reads everything we do with magnifying-glasses: and I like fun, always did, and always shall;

and then he would be jealous — and then I should leave him the house to himself, that is all.”

“No, no! you would break him in to common-sense.”

“More likely he would make a slave of me; and, if I am to be one, let me gild the chain a bit, as the saying is.”

“Now, Rose,” said the tactician, “you know very well a woman can turn a man round her finger if he loves her.”

“Of course I know that; but Robert does not happen to love me.”

“Doesn’t love you! Ay, but he does!”

“What makes you think that?”

“Oh, if you are blind, I am not. He tries to hide it, because you are rich, and he is poor and proud.”

“Oh, fie! don’t talk nonsense. What signifies who has the money?”

“The way I first found it out, is, when they speak of you marrying that Hickman, he trimbles all over like. Here comes his mother; you ask her,” added the audacious schemer.

“No, no!” cried Mrs. Mayfield; “none of your nonsense before her, if you please;” and she ran off with a heightened color.

“I shall win the day,” cried Hathorn to his wife. “I have made her believe Robert loves her, and now I’ll tell him she dotes on him. Why, what is the matter with you? You seem put out. What ails you?”

“I have just seen Robert, and I don’t like his looks. He is like a man in a dream this morning — worse than ever.”

“Why, what can be the matter with him?”

“If I was to tell you my thought it wouldn’t please you — and, after all, I may be wrong. Hush! here he is. Take no notice, for Heaven’s sake.”

At this moment the object of his father's schemes and his mother's anxiety sauntered up to them, with his coat tied round his neck by the arms, and a pitchfork over his shoulder. "Father," said he, "you may tap the barrel; the last wagon is coming up the lane."

"Ay," was the answer; "and you go and offer your arm to Rose — she is come home — and ask her to dance with you."

"I am not in the humor to gallivant," was the languid answer. "I leave that to you, father."

"To me — at my time of life! Is that the way to talk at eight-and-twenty? And Rose Mayfield — the rose-tree in full blossom!"

"Yes; but too many have been smelling at the blossom for me ever to plant the tree in my garden."

"What does the boy mean?"

"To save time and words, father; because you have been at me about her once or twice of late."

"What! is it because she likes dancing and diversion at odd times? Is that got to be a crime, Parson Bob?"

"No! but I won't have a wife I couldn't trust at those pastimes," was the resolute answer.

"Oh, if you are one of the jealous-minded ones, don't you marry any one, my poor chap!"

"Father, there are the strange reapers to pay. Shall I settle with them for you?" said Robert, quietly.

"No! Let them come here; I'll pay them," answered Hathorn senior, rather sullenly.

If you want to be crossed and thwarted and vexed, set your heart not on a thing you can do yourself, but on something somebody else is to do: if you want to be tormented to death, let the wish of your heart depend upon *two* people, a man and a woman, neither of them yourself. Now do try this recipe; you will find it an excellent one.

Old Hathorn, seated outside his own door, with a table and money-bags before him, paid the Irishmen and the Hampshire lads, and invited each man to the harvest-home dinner. He was about to rise and put up his money-bags, when Mrs. Hathorn cried to him from the house, "Here are two more that have not been paid;" and the next minute old Patrick and Rachael issued from the house, and came in front of the table. Robert, who was going in to dress, turned round and leaned against the corner of the house, with his eyes upon the ground. "Let me see," said Hathorn, "what are you to have?"

"Count yourself," replied Patrick; "you know what you give the others."

"What I give the others! but you can't have done the work" —

"Not of two; no, we don't ask the wages of two."

"Of course you don't."

A spasm of pain crossed Robert's face at this discussion, but he remained with his eyes upon the ground.

"Where's the dispute?" said the old soldier, angrily; "here are two that ask the wages of one; is that hard upon you?"

"There is no dispute, old man," said Robert steadily. "Father, twenty-five times five shillings is six pound five; that is what you owe them."

"Six pound five, for a man of that age?"

"And my daughter; is she to go for nothing?"

"Your daughter, your daughter; she is not strong enough to do much, I'm sure."

Rachael colored: her clear, convincing voice fell upon the disputants. "We agreed with Master Robert to keep a ridge between us, and we have done it as well as the best reaper. Pay us as one good reaper, then."

"That's fair! that is fair! If you agreed with my

son, a bargain is a bargain; but for all that, one good arm is better than two weak ones, and "—

This tirade received an unexpected interruption. Robert walked up to the table, without lifting his eyes from the ground, and said, "I ask your pardon, father, your bad leg has kept you at home this harvest; but I rip't at the head of the band, and I assure you the young woman did a man's share; and every now and then the old man took her place; and so resting by turns they kept ahead of the best sickle there. And therefore I say," continued Robert, raising his eyes timidly, "on account of their poverty, their weary limbs, and their stout heart for work, you cannot pay them less than one good reaper."

"What is it, Robert?" asked Mrs. Hathorn, who had come out to see the meaning of all this.

"But if he would be juster still, mother, like him that measures his succor to the need, he would pay them as one and a half; I've said it."

Hathorn stared with ludicrous wonder. "And why not as two? Are you mad, Robert? taking their part against me?"

"Enough said," answered Patrick with spirit. "Thank you, Master Robert, but that would be an alms, and we take but our due. Pay our two sickles as one, and let us go."

"You see, father," cried Robert, "these are decent people, and if you had seen how they wrought, your heart would melt as mine does. O mother! it makes me ill to think there are poor Christians in the world so badly off they must bow to work beyond their age and strength to bear. Take a thought, father. A man that might be *your* father—a man of fourscore years—and a delicate woman—to reap, the hardest of all country work, from dawn till sundown, under this

scorching sun and wind that has dried my throat and burned my eyes,—let alone theirs. It is hard, father; and if you have a feeling heart you can't show it better than here."

"There, there!" cried the farmer, "say no more; it is all right (you have made the girl cry, Bob). Robert doesn't often speak, dame, so we are bound to listen when he does. There is the money. I never heard that chap say so many words before."

"We thank you all," said Patrick; "my blessing be on your grain, good folks; and that won't hurt you from a man of fourscore."

"That it will not, Daddy Patrick," said Mrs. Hathorn. "You will stay for harvest-home, both of you? Rachael, if you have a mind to help me, wash some of the dishes."

"Ay!" cried the farmer: "and it is time you were dressed, Bob." And so the party separated.

A few minutes later Rachael came to the well, and began to draw a bucket of water. This well worked in the following manner: a chain and rope were passed over a cylinder, and two buckets were attached to the several ends of the rope, so that the empty bucket descending, helped in some slight degree the full bucket to mount. This cylinder was turned by an iron handle. The well was a hundred feet deep. Rachael drew the bucket up easily enough until the last thirty feet; and then she found it hard work. She had both hands on the iron handle, and was panting a little like a tender fawn, when a deep but gentle voice said in her ear, "Let go, Rachael;" and the handle was taken out of her hand by Robert Hathorn.

"Never mind me, Master Robert," said Rachael, giving way reluctantly.

"Always at some hard work or other," said he; "you will not be easy till you kill yourself." And with this

he whirled the handle round like lightning with one hand, and the bucket came up in a few moments. He then filled a pitcher for her, which she took up, and was about to go into the house with it. "Stay one minute, Rachael."

"Yes, Master Robert."

"How old are you, Rachael?" Robert blushed after he had put this question; but he was obliged to say something, and he did not well know how to begin.

"Twenty-two," was Rachael's answer.

"Don't go just yet. Is this your first year's reaping?"

"No, the third."

"You must be very poor, I am afraid."

"Very poor indeed, Master Robert."

"Do you live far from here?"

"Don't you remember I told you I came twenty miles from here?"

"Why, Newbury is about that distance."

"I think your mother will want me."

"Well, don't let me keep you against your will."

Rachael entered the Hathorns' side.

Robert's heart sank. She was so gentle, yet so cold and sad. There was no winning her confidence, it appeared. Presently she returned with an empty basket to fetch the linen from Mrs. Mayfield's side. As she passed Robert, who, in despair, had determined not to try any more, but who looked up sorrowfully in her face, she gave him a smile, a very faint one, but still it did express some slight recognition and thanks. His resolve melted at this one little ray of kindly feeling.

"Rachael," said he, "have you any relations your way?"

"Not now;" and Rachael was a beautiful statue again.

"But you have neighbors who are good to you?"

"We ask nothing of them."

"Would it not be better if you could both live near us?"

"I think not."

"Why? my mother has a good heart."

"Indeed she has."

"And Mrs. Mayfield is not a bad one, either."

"I hear her well spoken of."

"And yet you mean to live on, so far away from all of us?"

"Yes! I must go for the linen." She waited a moment as it were for permission to leave him, and nothing more being said, she entered Mrs. Mayfield's side.

Robert leaned his head sorrowfully on the rails and fell into a reverie.

"I am nothing to her," thought he; "her heart is far away. How good, and patient, and modest she is, but oh, how cold! She turns my heart to stone. I am a fool; she has some one in her own country to whom she is as warm, perhaps, as she is cold to us strangers—is that a fault? She is too beautiful, and too good, not to be esteemed by others beside me. Ah! her path is one way, mine another—worse luck—would to God she had never come here! Well, may she be happy! She can't hinder me from praying she may be happy, happier than she is now. Poor Rachael!"

A merry but somewhat vulgar voice broke incredibly harsh and loud, as it seemed, upon young Hathorn's reverie.

"Good-day, Master Robert."

Robert looked up, and there stood a young farmer in shooting-jacket and gaiters, with a riding-whip in his hand.

“Good-morning, Mr. Hickman.”

“The mistress is come home, I hear, and it is your harvest-home to-day, so I’ll stop here, for I am tired, and so is my horse for that matter.” Mr. Hickman wasted the latter part of this discourse on vacancy, for young Hathorn went coolly away without taking any further notice of him.

“I call that the cold shoulder,” thought Hickman; “but it is no wonder; that chap wants to marry her himself, of course he does — not if I know it, Bob Hathorn.”

It was natural that Hickman, whose great object just now was Rose Mayfield, should put this reading on Robert’s coldness: but in point of fact, it was not so; the young man had no feeling towards Hickman but the quiet repugnance of a deep to a shallow soul, of a quiet and thoughtful to a rattling fellow. Only just now gayety was not in his heart, and as Hickman was generally gay, and always sonorous, he escaped to his own thoughts. Hickman watched his retreat with an eye that said, “You are my rival, but not one I fear: I can outwit you.” And it was with a smile of triumphant conscious superiority that Richard Hickman turned round to go into Mrs. Mayfield’s house, and found himself face to face with Rachael, who was just coming out of it with the basket full of linen in her hand.

Words cannot paint the faces of this woman and this man, when they saw one another. They both started, and were red and white by turns, and their eyes glared upon one another; yet, though the surprise was equal, the emotion was not quite the same. The woman stood, her bosom heaving slowly and high, her eye dilating, her lips apart, her elastic figure rising higher and higher. She stood there wild as a startled panther, uncertain whether to fight or to fly. The man, after the first

start, seemed to cower under her eye, and half a dozen expressions that chased one another across his face left one fixed there — Fear! abject fear!

CHAPTER II.

THEY eyed one another in silence: at last Hickman looked down upon the ground and said, in faltering, ill-assured tones, "H-how d'ye do, Rachael? I—I didn't expect to see you here."

"Nor I you."

"If you are busy, don't let me stop you, you know," said Hickman, awkwardly and confused, and like one with no great resources compelled to utter something.

Then Rachael, white as a sheet, took up her basket again, and moved away in silence; the young farmer eyed her apprehensively, and, being clearly under the influence of some misgivings as to her intentions, said, "If you blow me, it will do me harm and you no good, you know, Rachael. Can't we be friends?"

"Friends!—you and I?"

"Don't be in such a hurry—let us talk it over. I am a little better off than I used to be in those days."

"What is that to me?"

"Plenty; if you won't be spiteful, and set others against me in this part;" by "others," doubtless Hickman intended Mrs. Mayfield.

"I shall neither speak nor think of you," was the cold answer.

Had Richard Hickman been capable of fathoming Rachael Wright, or even of reading her present marble look and tone aright, he would have seen that he had little to apprehend from her beyond contempt, a thing

he would not in the least have minded; but he was cunning, and, like the cunning, shallowish, so he pursued his purpose feeling his way with her to the best of his ability.

"I have had a smart bit of money left me lately, Rachael."

"What is that to me?"

"What is it? why, a good deal, because I could assist you *now*, maybe."

"And what right have you to assist me *now*?"

"Confound it, Rachael, how proud you are! — why, you are not the same girl. Oh! I see, as for assisting you, I know you would rather work than be in debt to any one; but then there is another besides you, you know."

"What other?" said Rachael, losing her impassibility, and trembling all over at this simple word.

"What other? why, confound it, who ever saw a girl fence like this? I suppose you think I am not man enough to do what's right; I am though, now I have got the means."

"To do what?"

"Why, to do my duty by him — to provide for him."

"FOR WHOM?" cried Rachael wildly, "WHEN HE IS DEAD?"

"Dead?"

"Dead!"

"Don't say so, Rachael; don't say so."

"He is dead!"

"Dead! I never thought I should have cared much; but that word do seem to knock against my heart. I'd give a hundred pounds to any one would tell me it is not true — poor thing; I've been to blame; I've been to blame."

"You were not near us when he came into the world;

you were not near us when he went out of it. He lived in poverty with me; he died in poverty for all I could do, and it is against my will if I did not die with him. Our life or our death gave you no care. Whiles he lived, you received a letter every six months from me, claiming my rights as your wife."

Hickman nodded assent.

"Last year you had no letter."

"No more there was."

"And did not that tell you? Poor Rachael had lost her consolation and her hope, and had no more need of anything!"

"Poor Rachael!" cried the man, stung with sudden remorse. "Curse it all! Curse you, Dick Hickman!" Then, suddenly recovering his true nature, and, like us men, never at a loss for an excuse against a woman, he said angrily, "What is the use of letters — why didn't you come and tell me you were so badly off?"

"Me come after you the wrong-doer?"

"Oh! confound your pride! should have sent the old man to me, then."

"My grandfather, an old soldier as proud as fire! Send him to the man who robbed me of my good name by cheating the law. You are a fool! Three times he left our house with his musket loaded to kill you — three times I got him home again; but how? — by prayers, and tears, and force — all three, or you would not be here in life."

"The devil! what an old Tartar! I say, is he here along with you?"

"Oh, you need not fear," said Rachael, with a faint expression of scorn, "he is going directly, and I am going too; and when I do go from here I shall have lost all the little pleasure and hope I have in the world," said Rachael, sorrowfully, and as she said this, she became

unconscious of Hickman's presence, and moved away without looking at him; but that prudent person dared not part with her so. He was one of those men who say, "I know the women," and, in his sagacity, he dreaded this woman's tongue. He determined, therefore, to stop her tongue, and not to risk Rose Mayfield and thousands for a few pounds.

"Now, Rachael, listen to me. Since the poor child is dead, there is only you to think of. We can do one another good or harm, you and I; better good than harm, I say. Suppose I offered you twenty pounds, now, to keep dark?"

"You poor creature!"

"Well, thirty, then?"

"Oh, hold your tongue!—you make me ashamed of myself as well as you."

"I see what it is, you want too much: you want me to be your husband."

"No; while my child lived, I claimed my right for his sake; but not now, not now," and the poor girl suddenly turned her eyes on Hickman with an indescribable shudder, that a woman would have interpreted to the letter; but no man could be expected to read it quite aright, so many things it said.

Hickman, the sagacious, chose to understand by it pique and personal hostility to him, and desire of vengeance; and, having failed to bribe her, he now resolved to try and outface her.

It so happened that at this very moment merry voices began to sound on every side. The clatter was heard of tables being brought out of the kitchen, and the harvest-home people were seen coming towards the place where Rachael and Hickman were; so Hickman said, hastily, "Any way, don't think to blow me—for if you do, I'll swear ye out, my lass, I'll swear ye out."

"No doubt you know how to lie," was the cold reply.

"There, Rachael," cried Hickman piteously, lowering his tone of defiance in a moment, "don't expose me before the folk, whatever you do. Here they all come, confound them!"

Rachael made no answer. She retired into the Hathorns' house, and in a few minutes the tables were set just outside the house, and loaded with good cheer, and the rustics began to ply knife and fork as zealously as they had sickle, and rake, and pitchfork. And so, on the very spot of earth where Rachael had told Hickman her child was dead, and with him her heart, scarce five minutes afterwards came the rattle of knives and forks, and peals of boisterous laughter, and huge feeding. And thus it happens to many a small locality in this world, — tragedy, comedy, and farce are acted on it by turns, and all of them in earnest. So harvest-home dinner proceeded with great zeal, and after the solids the best ale was served round *ad libitum*, and intoxication, sanctified by immemorial usage, followed in due course. However, as this symptom of harvest was a long time coming on upon the present occasion, owing to peculiar interruptions, the reader will not have to follow us so far, which, let us hope, he will not regret.

Few words worthy of being embalmed in an immortal story, warranted to live a month, were uttered during the discussion of the meats, for when the *fruges consumere nati* are let loose upon beef, bacon, and pudding, among the results dialogue on a large scale is not.

"Yet shall the Muse" embalm a conversation that passed on this occasion between the brothers Messenger, laborers, aged about fifty, who had been on this farm nearly all their lives.

Bob Messenger was carving a loin of veal. Jem Messenger sat opposite him, eating bacon and beans on a very large scale.

Bob (aiming at extraordinary politeness). Wool you have some veal along with your bacon, *Jem*?

Jem. That I wool not, *Bob* (with a reproachful air, as one whom a brother had sought to entrap).

When the table was cleared of the viands, the ale-mugs and horns were filled, and *Mrs. Mayfield* and the *Hathorns* took part in the festive ceremony — that is, they did not sit at the table, but they showed themselves from time to time, and made their humble guests heartily welcome by word and look and smile, as their forefathers had done at harvest time each in their century and generation.

Presently *Bob Messenger* arose solemnly, with his horn of ale in his hand. The others rose after him, knowing well what he was going to do, and chanted with him the ancient harvest-home stave, —

Here's a health unto our master,
The founder of the feast,
Not only to our master,
But to our mistress.

Two voices. Then drink, boys, drink,
And see as you do not spill,
For if you do you shall drink to
Our health with a free good-will.

Chorus. Then drink, boys, drink, etc.

Corporal Patrick and *Rachael* left the table. They had waited only to take part in this compliment to their entertainers, and now they left. The reason was, one or two had jeered them before grace.

The corporal had shaved and made himself very clean, and he had put on his faded red jacket, which he always carried about, and *Rachael* had washed his neck-handkerchief, and tied it neatly about his neck, and had put on herself a linen collar and linen wristband, very small

and plain, but white and starched; and at this their humble attempt to be decent and nice, one or two (who happened to be dirty at the time) could not help sneering. Another thing, Rachael and Patrick were strangers. Some natives cut a jest or two at their expense, and Patrick was about to answer by flinging his mug at one man's head, but Rachael restrained him, and said, "Be patient, grandfather. They were never taught any better. When the farmer's health has been drunk we can leave them."

People should be able to take jests, or to answer them in kind, not to take them to heart; but Rachael and Patrick had seen better days (they were not so very proud and irritable then), and now Patrick, naturally high-spirited, was sore, and could not bear to be filliped, and Rachael was become too cold and bitter towards all the vulgar natures that blundered up against her, not meaning her any good, nor much harm either, poor devils!

A giggle greeted their departure, but it must be owned it was a somewhat uneasy giggle.

There was in the company a certain Timothy Brown John, who was naturally a shoemaker, but was turned out into the stubble annually at harvest time. The lad had a small rustic genius for music, which he illustrated by playing the clarionet in church, to the great regret of the clergyman. Now, after the chorus, one or two were observed to be nudging this young man, and he to be making those mock-modest difficulties which are part of a singer in town or country.

"Ay, Tim," cried Mrs. Mayfield, "you sing us a song."

"He have got a new one, mistress," put in a carter's lad, with saucer eyes.

"What is it about, boy?"

"Well," replied the youngster, "it is about love (at

which the girls giggled), and I think it is about you, Dame Mayfield."

"About me! then it must be nice."

Chorus of Rustics. Haw! haw! haw!

"Come, Mr. Brown John, I will trouble you for it directly. I can see the bottom of some of their mugs, Jane."

"Well," said Mr. Brown John, looking down, "I don't know what to say about it. Mayhap you mightn't like it quite so well before so much company."

"Why not, pray?"

"Well, you see, dame, I am afeard I shall give you a red face, like, with this here song."

"If you do, I'll give you one with this here hand."

Chorus. Haw, haw! ho!

"Drat the boy! sing, and have done with it."

"I'll do my best, ma'am," replied Tim gravely.

On this, Mr. Brown John drew from his pocket a diminutive flute, with one key, and sounded his G at great length. He then paused, to let his G enter his own mind and those around; he then composed his features like a preacher, and was about to enter on his undertaking, when the whole operation was suddenly and remorselessly and provokingly interrupted by Mr. Casenower, who, struck, as it appeared, with a sudden, irresistible idea, burst upon them all with this question:—

"Do any of you know one Rebecca Reid, in this part of the world?"

The company stared.

Some, to whom this question had been put by him before, giggled, others scratched their heads, others got no farther than a stricken look. A few mustered together their wits, and assured Mr. Casenower they had never heard tell of the "wench."

"How odd!" cried Casenower. "It is not such a common combination of sounds, one would think."

"I know Hannah Reid," squeaked a small cow-boy; he added, with enthusiasm, "She is a capital slider, she is!" and he smiled at some reminiscence, perchance of a joint somersault upon the ice last winter.

"Hannah does not happen to be Rebecca, young gentleman," objected Casenower: "sing away, John Brown."

"I'm a-going, sir. G—g—g—g—" and he impressed the key-note once more upon their souls. Then sang Brown John the following song, and the rest made the laughing chorus, and, as they all laughed in different ways, though they began laughing from their heads, ended in laughing from their hearts. It was pleasant, and rather funny, and proved so successful that after this *Il Maestro* Brown John and his song were asked to all the feasts in a circle of seven miles.

There were eight verses: we will confine ourselves to two, because paper is not absolutely valueless, whatever the trivoluminous may think.

When Richard appeared, how my heart pit-a-pat,
 With a tenderly motion, with which it was seized!
 To hear the young fellow's gay, innocent chat,
 I could listen forever — oh dear! I'm so pleased!
 I'm so pleased! ha! ha! ha! ha!
 I'm so pleased! ha! ha! ha! ha!
 I'm going to be married — oh dear! I'm so pleased!
 I'm going to be married — oh dear! I'm so pleased!
Chorus. I'm so pleased, etc.

Oh, sweet is the smell of the new-mown hay,
 And sweet are the cowslips that spring in May;
 But sweeter's my lad than the daisied lawn,
 Or the hay, or the flower, or the cows at the dawn.

Chorus. I'm so pleased, etc.

We writers can tell "the what," but not so very often "the how," of anything. I can give Tim's bare words, but it is not in my power, nor any man's, to write down the manner of *Il Maestro* in singing. How he dwelt on the short syllables, and abridged the long, his grave face till he came to his laugh, and then the enormous mouth that flew suddenly open, and the jovial peal that came ringing through two rows of teeth like white chess-pawns, and, with all this, his quaint, indescribable, dulcet, rustic twang, that made his insignificant melody ring like church-bells heard from the middle of a wood, and taste like metheglin come down to us in a yew-tree cask from the Druids !

During the song one Robert Munday and his son, rural fiddlers, who by instinct nosed festivities, appeared at the gate, each with a green bag. A shriek of welcome greeted them. They were set in a corner, with beef and ale galore, and soon the great table was carried in, the ground cleared, the couples made, and the fiddles tuning.

The Messrs. Munday made some preliminary flourishes, like hawks hovering uncertain where to pounce, and then, like the same bird, they suddenly dashed into "The Day in June."

Their style was rough, and bore a family likeness to ploughing, but it was true, clean, and spirited ; the notes of the *arpeggio* danced out like starry sparks in fireworks.

Moreover, the Messrs. Munday played to the foot, which is precisely what your melted-butter violinist always fails to do, whether he happens to be washing out the soul of a waltz, or of a polka, or of a reel.

They also played so as to raise the spirits of all who heard them, young or old, which is an artistic effect of the very highest order, however attained, and never is and never will be attained by the melted-butter violinist.

The fiddlers being merry, the dancers were merry ;

the dancers being merry, the fiddlers said to themselves, "Aha! we have not missed fire," and so grew merrier still; and thus the electric fire of laughter and music darted to and fro. Dance, sons and daughters of toil! None had ever a better right to dance than you have this sunny afternoon in clear September. It was you who painfully ploughed the stiff soil, it was you who trudged up the high, incommoding furrow, and cast abroad the equal seed. You that are women bowed the back and painfully drilled holes in the soil, and poured in the seed; and this month past you have all bent, and with sweating brows cut down and housed the crops that came from the seed you planted. Dance, for those yellow ricks, trophies of your labor, say you have a right to; those barns, bursting with golden fruit, swear you have a right to. Harvest-tide comes but once a year. Dance, sons and daughters of toil! Exult over your work, smile with the smiling year, and in this bright hour, oh cease, my poor souls, to envy the rich and great. Believe me, they are never, at any hour of their lives, so cheery as you are now. How can they be? With them dancing is tame work, an every-day business, no rarity, no treat; don't envy them; God is just, and deals the sources of content with a more equal hand than appears on the surface of things. Dance, too, without fear; let no Puritan make you believe it is wrong. Things are wrong out of season, and right in season: to dance in harvest is as becoming as to be grave in church. The Almighty has put it into the hearts of insects to dance in the afternoon sun, and of men and women in every age and every land to dance round the gathered crop, whether it be corn, or oil, or wine, or any other familiar miracle that springs up sixty-fold, and nurtures and multiplies the life of man. More fire, fiddlers! play to the foot, play to the heart, the sprightly "Day in June." Ay! foot it freely, lads and

lasses; my own heart is warmer to think you are merry once or twice in your year of labor; dance, my poor brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of toil!

After several dances, Mrs. Mayfield, who had been uneasy in her mind at remaining out of the fun, could bear inaction no longer, so she pounced on Robert Hathorn, and drew him into the magic square. Robert danced, but in a very listless way: so much so, that his mother, who stood by, took occasion to give him a push and say, "Is that the way to dance?" at which poor Robert tried to do better, but his limbs, as well as his face, showed how far his heart was from his heels.

Now, in the middle of this dance, suddenly loud and angry sounds were heard approaching, and the voice of old Patrick was soon distinguished, and the next moment he was seen following Mr. Hickman, and hanging on his rear, loading him with invective. Rachael was by his side, endeavoring, in vain, to soothe him, and to end what to her was a most terrible scene. At a gesture from Mrs. Mayfield, the fiddlers left off and the rustics turned, all curiosity, towards the interruption. "There are bad hearts in the world," shouted Patrick to all present, "vermin that steal into honest houses and file¹ them—bad hearts, that rob the poor of that which is before life; oh, yes, far before life!" and as he uttered the words, Patrick was observed to stagger.

"The old man is drunk," said Hickman. "I don't know what he means."

Rachael colored high and cried, "No! Master Robert, I assure you he is not drunk, but he is not himself: he has been complaining this hour past; see! look at his eye. Good people, my grandfather is ill;" and indeed, as she said these words, Patrick, who from the moment he had staggered, had stared wildly and confusedly

¹ For defile.

around him, suddenly bowed his head and dropped upon his knees; he would have fallen on his face, but Rachael's arm now held him up.

In a moment several persons came round them, amongst the rest, Robert and Mrs. Mayfield. Robert loosened his neckcloth, and, looking at the old man's face and eye, he said, gravely and tenderly, "Rachael, I have seen the like of this before — in harvest."

"O Master Robert! what is it?"

"Rachael, it is a stroke of the sun!" He turned to his mother. "God forgive us all, the old man was never fit for the work we have put him to."

"Come, don't stand gaping there," cried Mrs. Mayfield; "mount my mare and gallop for the doctor — don't spare her — off with you! Betsy, get a bed ready in my garret."

"Eh, dear!" said Mrs. Hathorn, "I doubt the poor thing's troubles are over," and she put up her apron and began to cry.

"Oh, no!" cried Rachael. "Grandfather — don't leave me! — don't leave me!"

Corporal Patrick's lips moved.

"I can't see ye! I can't see any of ye!" he said, half fretfully. "Ah!" he resumed, as if a light had broken in on him. "Yes!" said he very calmly, "I think I am going;" but the next moment he cried in tones that made the bystanders thrill, so wild and piteous they were — "My daughter! my daughter! — she will miss me!"

Robert Hathorn fell on his knees, and took the old hand with one of those grasps that bring soul into contact with soul; the old soldier, who was at this moment past seeing or hearing, felt this grasp, and turned to it as an unconscious plant turns to the light. "I can't see you," said he faintly; "but, whoever you are, take care of my child! — she is such a good child!" The hands

spoke to one another still ; then the old soldier almost smiled, and the anxious, frightened look of his face began to calm. "Thank God," he faltered, "they are going to take care of my child !" And, almost with these words, he lost all sense, and lay pale and calm and motionless at their feet, and his hand could grasp Robert's no more. There was a moment of dead silence and inquiring looks. Robert looked into his face gravely and attentively.

When he had so inspected him a little while, he turned to them all, and he said in a deep and almost a stern voice, —

"Hats off !"

They all uncovered, and stood looking like stricken deer at the old soldier as he lay. The red jacket had nothing ridiculous now. When it was new and bright, it had been in great battles. They asked themselves now, had they really sneered at this faded rag of England's glory, and at that withered hero ?

"Didn't think the old man was a-going to leave us like that," said one of these rough penitents, "or I'd never ha' wagged my tongue again un."

Mrs. Mayfield gave orders to have him carried up to her garret : and four stout rustics, two at his head and two at his feet, took him up the stairs, and laid him there on a decent bed. When Rachael saw the clean floor, the little carpet round the foot of the bed, the bright walls and windows, and the snowy sheets made ready for her grandfather, she hid her face and wept, and said but two words — "Too late ! too late !"

As Rachael was following her grandfather up the stairs, she met Hickman : that worthy had watched this sorrowful business in silence ; he had tears in his eyes, and coming to her, he whispered in her ear, "Rachael, don't fret — I will not desert you now." On the landing, a moment after, Rachael met Robert Hathorn : he

said to her, "Rachael, your grandfather trusted you to me."

When Hickman said that to her, Rachael turned and looked at him.

When Robert said that to her, she lowered her eyes away from him.

CHAPTER III.

THE poor battered soldier lay some hours between life and death. Just before sunrise, Rachael, who had watched him all night, and often moistened his temples with vinegar, opened the window: and as the morning air came into the room, a change for the better was observed in the patient—a slight color stole into his pale cheeks, and he seemed to draw a fuller breath, and his heart beat more perceptibly. Rachael kneeled and prayed for him, and then she prayed to him not to leave her alone: the sun had been up about an hour, and came fiery bright into the whitewashed room; for it looked towards the east; and Corporal Patrick's lips moved, but without uttering a sound. Rachael prayed for him again and most fervently. About nine o'clock his lips moved, and this time he spoke,—

"Rear rank, right wheel!"

The next moment, a light shot into his eye. His looks rested upon Rachael: he smiled feebly, but contentedly, then closed his eyes, and slumbered again.

Corporal Patrick lived. But it was a near thing, a very near thing—he was saved by one of those accidents we call luck. When Mrs. Mayfield's Tom rode for the doctor, the doctor was providentially out. Had he been in, our tale would be now bidding farewell to Corporal

Patrick — for this doctor was one of the pig-sticking ones. He loved to stab men and women with a tool that has slain far more than the sword in modern days; it is called "the lancet." Had he found a man insensible, he would have stabbed him; he always stabbed a fellow-creature when he caught it insensible: not very generous, was it? — now, had he drawn from those old veins one table-spoonful of that red fluid which is the life of a man, the aged man would have come to his senses only to sink the next hour, and die for want of that vital stream stolen from him by rule.

As it was, he breathed; and came back to life by slow degrees. At first his right arm was powerless; then he could not move the right leg, but at last he recovered the use of his limbs, but remained feeble, and his poor head was sore confused: one moment he would be quite himself; another, his memory of recent events would be obscured — and then he would shake his head and sigh — but nature was strong in him; and he got better — but slowly.

As soon as he was able to walk, Rachael proposed to Mrs. Mayfield to return home, but Mrs. Hathorn interposed, and requested Rachael to take her own servant's place for another week, in order to let the servant visit her friends. On these terms Rachael remained, and did the work of the Hathorns' house, and it was observed that during this period more color came to her cheek, and her listlessness and languor sensibly diminished.

She was very active and zealous in her work, and old Hathorn was so pleased with her, that he said one day to Mrs. Hathorn, "I don't care if Betsy never comes back at all; this one is worth a baker's dozen of her, this Rachael."

"Betsy will serve our turn as well in the long run," said Mrs. Hathorn, somewhat dryly and thoughtfully.

"Betsy!" replied the farmer, contemptuously; "there is more sense in this Rachael's forefinger than in that wench's whole carcass."

It was about two days after this, that the following conversation took place between Robert Hathorn and his mother:—

"Is it true, what I hear, that Mr. Patrick talks about going next week?"

"Have not they been here long enough, Robert? I wish they may not have been here too long."

"Why too long, when you asked them to stay yourself, mother?"

"Yes, I did; and I doubt I did very wrong. But it is hard for a mother to deny her son."

"I am much obliged to you, mother; but I don't remember that ever I asked you."

"No, no! I don't say that you ever spoke your mind, Robert; but you looked up in my face, and showed your wish plain enough to *my* eye; and you see a poor foolish body like me doesn't know how to say No to her boy that never vexed her. I should have been a better friend to you if I had turned my head away, and made-believe not to see what is in your heart."

Robert paused awhile, then in a low anxious voice, he whispered, —

"Don't you like her, mother?"

"Yes! I like her, my poor soul. What is there to dislike in her? But I don't know her."

"But I know her as well as if we had been seven years acquainted."

"You talk like a child! How can you know a girl that comes from a strange part?"

"I'd answer for her, mother."

"I wouldn't answer for any young wench of them all. I do notice she is very close: ten to one if she has not an acquaintance of some sort, good or bad."

"A bad acquaintance, mother! Never! If you had seen her through all the harvest-month, as I did, respect herself and make others respect her, you would see that girl never could have made a trip in her life."

"Now, Robert, what makes you so sad-like, if you have no misgivings about her?"

"Because, mother, I don't think she likes me so well as I do her."

"All the better," said Mrs. Hathorn, dryly, "make up your mind to that."

"Do not say so! do not say so!" said Robert, piteously.

"Well, Robert, she does not hate you, you may be sure of that. Why is she in such a hurry to go away?"

"Because she has some one in her own country she likes better than me."

"Ay! that is the way you boys read women. More likely she is afraid of liking you too well, and making mischief in a family."

"O mother! do you think it is that?"

"There, I am a fool to tell you such things."

"Oh, no, no, no! There is no friend like a mother."

"There is no fool like a mother, that is my belief."

"No, no! Give me some comfort, mother; tell me you see some signs of liking in her."

"Well, then, when she is quite sure you are not looking her way, I can see her eye dwell upon you as if it was at home."

"Oh, how happy you make me! but, mother, how you must have watched her!"

"Of course I watched her, and you too. I've seen a long while how matters were going."

"But you never spoke to Rose, or my father?"

"If I had, she would have been turned out of the house, and a good job, too; but you would have fretted, you know," and Mrs. Hathorn sighed.

"Mother, I must kiss you. I shall have courage to speak to father about it now."

"Take a thought, Robert. His heart is set upon your marrying your cousin. It would be a bitter pill to the poor old man, and his temper is very hasty. For heaven's sake, take a thought. I don't know what to do, I am sure."

"I must do it soon or late," said Robert resolutely. "No time so good as now. Father is hasty, and he will be angry no doubt; but after awhile he will give in; I don't ask favors every day. Do you consent, mother?"

"O Robert, what is the use asking me whether I consent? I have only one son, and he is a good one. I am afraid I could not say No to your happiness, suppose it was my duty to say No; but your father is not such a fool as I am, and I am main doubtful whether he will ever consent. I wish you could think better of it."

"I will try him, mother, no later than to-day. Why, here he comes. Oh, there is Mr. Casenower with him; that is unlucky. You get him away, mother, and I'll open my mind to father."

Old Hathorn came past the window, and entered the room where Robert and Mrs. Hathorn were. The farmer stumped in, and sat down with some appearance of fatigue. Mr. Casenower sat down opposite him.

That gentleman had in his hand a cabbage. He was proving to the farmer that this plant is more nutritious than the potato. The theory was German in the first instance. "There are but three nourishing principles in all food," argued Mr. Casenower, "and of those, what we call 'fibrine' is the most effective. Now, see, I put my nail to this stalk, and it readily reduces itself to a bundle of little fibres; see, those are pure fibrine, and, taken into the stomach, make the man muscular. Can anything be clearer?"

Mr. Hathorn, who had shown symptoms of impatience, replied to this effect, "That he knew by personal experience that cabbage turns to nothing but hot water in a man's belly."

"There are words to come out of a man's mouth!" objected Mrs. Hathorn.

"Better than cabbage going into it," grunted the farmer.

"Ah, you know nothing of chemistry, my good friend."

"Well, sir, you say there is a deal of heart in a cabbage?"

"I do."

"Then I tell you what I'll do with you, sir. There is some fool has been and planted half an acre of cabbages in my barley-field"—

"It was not a fool," put in Mrs. Hathorn, sharply, "it was me."

"It was not a fool, you see, sir: it was a woman," responded Hathorn, mighty dryly. "Well, sir, you train on the dame's cabbages for a month, and all that time I'll eat nothing stronger than beef and bacon, and at the end of the month I'll fight you for a pot of beer, if you are so minded."

"This is the way we reason in the country, eh, Mr. Robert?"

"Yes, sir: it would serve father right if you took him up, sir, with his game leg; but I don't hold with cabbages, for all that; a turnip is watery enough, but a cabbage and a sponge are pretty much one, it seems to me."

"Mr. Casenower," put in Mrs. Hathorn, "didn't you promise to show me a pansy in your garden, that is to win the next prize at Wallingford?"

"I did, ma'am, but you should not call it 'pansy;'

'heart's-ease' is bad enough, without going back to 'pansy.' *Viola tricolor* is the name of the flower—the scientific name."

"No," said old Hathorn stoutly.

"No! What do you mean by No?"

"What are names for? To remember things by; then the scientificest name must be one that it is easiest to remember. Now, pansy is a deal easier to remember than 'vile tricolor.'"

"I am at your service, Mrs. Hathorn; come along, for heaven's sake;" and off bustled Mr. Casenower towards the garden with Mrs. Hathorn.

"Father," said Robert, after an uneasy pause, "I have something to say to you, very particular."

"Have you though? well, out with it, my lad!"

"Father"—

At this moment, in bustled Mr. Casenower again. "O Mr. Robert, I forgot something. Let me tell you, now I think of it. I want you to find out this Rebecca Reid for me. She lives somewhere near, within a few miles. I don't exactly know how many. Can't you find her out?"

"Why, sir," said Robert, "it is like looking for one poppy in a field of standing wheat."

"No, no! When you go to market, ask all the farmers from different parishes whether they know her."

"Haw, haw, haw!" went Hathorn senior. "Yes, do, Robert. Ho, ho!"

"Have you any idea what he is laughing at?" said Mr. Casenower, dryly.

"Father thinks you will make me the laughing-stock of the market, sir," said Robert, with a faint smile; "but never mind him, sir, I shall try and oblige you."

"You are a good fellow, Robert. I must go to Mrs. Hathorn," and off he bustled again.

"Father," began Robert ; but before he could open his subject, voices were heard outside, and Mrs. Mayfield came in, followed by Richard Hickman.

"Tic, tic, tic !" said poor Robert, peevishly, for he foresaw endless interruptions.

Mr. Hickman had been for some minutes past employed in the agreeable occupation of bringing Mrs. Mayfield to the point ; but for various reasons Mrs. Mayfield did not want to be brought to the point that forenoon. One of those reasons was, that although she liked Hickman well enough to marry him, she liked somebody else better, and she was not yet sure as to this person's intentions. She wanted, therefore, to be certain she could not have Paul, before she committed herself to Peter. Now, certain ladies, when they do not want to be brought to the point, have ways of avoiding it that a man would hardly hit upon. One of them is, to be constantly moving about ; for, they argue, "If he can't pin my body to any spot, he can't pin my soul, for my soul is contained in my body," and there is a certain vulgar philosophy in this. Another is, to be so absorbed in some small matter, that just then they cannot do justice to the larger question, and so modestly postpone it.

"Will I be yours till death us do part ? now, how can I tell you just now ? such a question demands at least some attention ; and look at this hole in my lace collar, which I am mending ; if I don't give my whole soul to it, how can I mend it properly ?"

Mr. Hickman had no sooner shown Mrs. Mayfield that he wanted to bring her to the point, than he found himself in for some hard work ; twice he had to cross the farmyard with her : he had to take up a sickly chicken and pronounce upon its ailment. He had to get some milk in a pail and give one of her calves a drink. He had to bring one cow from paddock to stall, and another

from stall to paddock ; and when all this and much more was done, the lady caught sight of our friends in the Hathorns' kitchen, and crying briskly, "Come this way," led Mr. Hickman into company where she knew he could not press the inopportune topic.

"Curse her!" muttered the enamoured one, as he followed her into the Hathorns' kitchen.

After the usual greetings, the farmer observing Robert's impatience, said to Hickman, "If you will excuse me for a minute, farmer, Robert wants to speak to me ; we are going towards the barn." He then beckoned Mrs. Mayfield, and whispered in her ear, "Don't let this one set you against my Robert that is worth a hundred of him."

Mrs. Mayfield whispered in return, "And don't let your Robert shillyshally so, because this one does not — You understand."

"All right," replied Hathorn, "ten to one if it is not you he wants to speak to me about."

Hathorn and his son then sauntered into the farmyard, and Hickman gained what he had been trying for so long, a quiet *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Mayfield — for all that, if a woman is one of those that have a wish, it is dangerous to *drive* her to the point.

"Well, Mrs. Mayfield," said he quietly but firmly, "I am courting you this six months, and now I should be glad to have my answer. 'Yes,' or 'No,' if you please."

Mrs. Mayfield sidled towards the window ; it commanded the farmyard : Robert and his father were walking slowly up and down by the side of the farmyard pond. Mrs. Mayfield watched them intently, then half turning towards Hickman, she said slowly, "Why, as to that, Mr. Hickman, you have certainly come after me awhile, and I'll not deny I find you very good company ; but I have been married once and made a great mistake,

as you have heard, I dare say ; so now I am obliged to be cautious."

"What, are you afraid of my temper, Rose ? I am not reckoned a bad-tempered one, any more than yourself."

"Oh, no ! I have no fault to find with you — only we have not been acquainted so very long."

"That is a fault will mend every day."

"Of course it will ; well, when you are settled on Bix, we shall see you mostly every day, and then we shall know one another better ; for if you have no faults, I have ; and then you will know better what sort of a bargain you are making ; and then — we will see about it."

"Better tell the truth," said the all-observant Hickman.

"The truth !"

"Ay ! that the old man wants you to marry Bob Hathorn. Oh ! I am down upon him this many a day."

"Robert Hathorn is nothing to me," replied the Mayfield, "but since you put him in my head, I confess I might do worse."

"How could you do worse than marry a lad who has nothing but his two arms ?"

Mrs. Mayfield, looking slyly through the window, observed Robert and his father to be in earnest conversation ; this somewhat colored her answer. She replied quickly, "Better poor and honest, than half rich and three parts of a rogue !"

"Is that for me, if you please ?" said Hickman, calmly but firmly.

"No ! I don't say it is," replied the lady, fearful she had gone too far ; "but still I wonder at your choosing this time for pressing me."

"Why not this time, as well as another, pray ?" and Hickman eyed her intently, though secretly.

"Why not!" said she, and she paused; for the dialogue between Hathorn and his son was now so animated, that the father's tones reached even to her ear.

"Ay! why not?" repeated Hickman.

The lady turned on him, and with a sudden change of manner, said very sharply, "Ask your own conscience."

"I don't know what you mean."

"I'll tell you. This old Patrick was miscalling you, when he fell ill. They say it was a stroke of the sun—maybe it was; but I should say passion had something to do with it too: the old man said words to you that none of the others noticed, but I did. He said as much as that you had robbed some one of what is before life in this world."

"Ay, and what is before life, I wonder?" asked the satirical Hickman.

"Why, nothing," replied the frank Mrs. Mayfield, "if you go to that; but it is a common saying that 'a good name is before life,' and that is what the old man meant."

"I wonder you should take any notice of what that old man says, and above all his daughter."

"His daughter, Mr. Hickman! Why, I never mentioned his daughter, for my part. You have been and put your own bricks on my foundation."

Hickman looked confused.

"You are a fool, Richard Hickman! You have told me more than I knew, and I see more than you tell me. You have led that girl astray, and deserted her likely, you little scamp!" (Hickman was five foot ten.)

"Nonsense!" put in Hickman. "That Rachael shall never come between you and me; but I'll tell you who the girl stands between: you and your Robert, that the farmer wants to put in the traces with you against his will."

"You are a liar!" cried Rose Mayfield, coloring to her temples.

Hickman answered coolly, "Thank you for the compliment, Rose. No, it is the truth. You see, when a man is wrapped up in a woman, as I am in you, he finds out everything that concerns her; and your boy Tom tells me that Robert is as fond of her as a cow of a calf."

"He fond of that Rachael! No!"

"Why, Rachael is a well-looking lass, if you go to that."

"And so she is," pondered Mrs. Mayfield; and in a moment many little circumstances in Robert's conduct became clear by this new light Hickman had given her. She struggled, and recovered her outward composure. "Well," said she, stoutly, "what is it to me?"

"Why, not much, I hope. Give me your hand, Rose; I don't fancy any girl but you. And name the day, if you will be so good."

"No, no!" said Rose Mayfield, nearly crying with vexation. "I won't marry any of you, a set of rogues and blockheads. And if it is true, I don't thank you for telling me. You are a sly, spiteful dog, and I don't care how often you ride past my house without hooking bridle to the gate, Dick Hickman."

Hickman bit his lips, but he kept his temper. "What! all this because Bob Hathorn's taste is not so good as mine! Ought I to suffer for his folly?"

"Oh, it is not for that, don't think it. But I don't want a lover that has ruined other women; it is not lucky, to say the least."

"What, all this because a girl jumped into my arms one day! Why, I am not so hard upon you. I hear tales about you, you know, but I only laugh—even about Frank Fairfield and you. (Mrs. Mayfield gave a

little start.) Neither you nor I are angels, you know. Why should we be hard on one another?"

Mrs. Mayfield, red as fire, interrupted him. "My faults, if I have any, have hurt me only; but yours never hurt you, and ruined others; and you say no more about me than you know, or you will get a slap in the mouth — and — there's my door; you take it at a word, and I'll excuse any further visits from *you*, Mr. Hickman."

These words, with a finger pointing to the door, and a flashing eye, left nothing for Hickman but to retire, which he did boiling with indignation, mortification, and revenge. "This is all along of Rachael. She has blown me," muttered he between his teeth. "I have got the bag; you sha'n't gain anything by it, Rachael!"

It will be remembered that when Patrick lay dying or dead, as supposed, this Hickman had a good impulse, and told Rachael he would never desert her: in this he was perfectly sincere at the moment. People utterly destitute of principle abound in impulses. They have good impulses, which come to nothing or next to nothing; and bad impulses, which they put in practice.

Mr. Hickman had time to think over his good impulse, and, accordingly, he thought better of it, and found that Rose Mayfield was too great a prize to resign. He therefore kept out of the way more than a week (a suspicious circumstance, which Mrs. Mayfield did not fail to couple with old Patrick's words), and his pity for Rachael evaporated in all that time. "What the worse is she for me now? Hang her, I offered her money, and what not; but I suppose nothing will serve her turn but hooking me for life, or else having her spite out, and spilling my milk for me here."

It was a fixed notion in this man's mind, that Rachael would do all she could to ruin his suit with Mrs. May-

field, and when he got the "sack," or, as he vulgarly called it, "the bag," he attributed it, in spite of Rose Mayfield's denial, to some secret revelation on Rachael's part, and a furious impulse to be revenged on her took possession of him.

Now this bad impulse, unlike his good one, had no time to cool. As he went towards the stable, in luck would have it he should meet Robert Hathorn. At sight of him our worthy acted upon his impulse. Robert, who was coming hastily from his father, with his brow knit and his countenance flushed, would have passed Hickman with the usual greeting, but Hickman would not let him off so easily.

"What, so you have got my old lass here still, Master Robert?"

"Your old lass! Not that I know of."

"Rachael Wright, you know."

"Rachael Wright, your lass!"

"Ay! and a very nice lass too, till we fell out. She gave me a broad hint just now, but I am for higher game. You could not lend me a spur, could you, Mr. Robert? Mine is broken."

"No."

"Never mind; good-morning, good-morning!"

Hickman's looks and contemptuous tones had eked out the few words with which he had stabbed Robert, and, together with the libertine character of the man, had effectually blackened Rachael in Robert's eyes.

This done, away went the poisoner, and chuckled as he went.

Robert Hathorn stood pale as death, looking after him. To this stupefaction succeeded a feeling of sickness, and a sense of despair, and Robert sat down upon the shaft of an empty cart, and gazed with stony eye upon the ground at his feet. His feelings were inexpressibly

bitter. Where was he to hope to find a woman he could respect, if this paragon was a girl of loose conduct? Then came remorse: for this Rachael he had this moment all but quarrelled with his father—their first serious misunderstanding. After a fierce struggle with himself, he forced himself to see that she must be wrenched out of his heart. He rose, pale but stern, after a silent agony that lasted a full hour, though to him it seemed but a minute, and went and looked after his father. He found him in the barn watching the threshers, but like one who did not see what he was looking at. His countenance was fallen and sad; the great and long-cherished wish of his heart had been shaken, and by his son; and then he had given that son bitter and angry words, and threatened him; and that son had answered respectfully, but firmly as iron, and the old man's heart began to sink.

He looked up, and there was Robert pale and stern, looking steadfastly at him with an expression he quite misunderstood. Old Hathorn lifted his head, and said sharply and bitterly to his son,—

“Well?”

“Father,” said Robert, in a languid voice, “I am come to ask your pardon.”

Farmer Hathorn looked astonished. Robert went on:

“I’ll marry any woman you like, father—they are all one to me now.”

“Why, what is the matter, Bob? that is too much the other way.”

“And if I said anything to vex you, forgive me, father, if *you* please.”

“No, no, no!” cried old Hathorn, “no more about it, Bob; there was no one to blame but my hasty temper—no more about it. Why, if the poor chap hasn’t taken it quite to heart, hasn’t a morsel of color left in his cheek!”

"Never mind my looks," gasped Robert.

"And don't you mind my words either then. Robert, you have made me happier than I have been any time this twenty years."

"I am glad of it," faltered Robert. "I'll look to this if you have anything else to do." He wanted to be alone.

"Thank you, Bob; I want to go into the village; keep up your heart, my lad. She is the best-looking woman I know, with the best heart *I* ever met, and I am older than you: and you see the worst of her the first day; her good part you are never at the bottom of; it is just the contrary with the sly ones. There, there! I'll say no more. Good-by." And away went the old farmer, radiant.

"Be happy," sobbed Robert; "I am glad there is one happy." And he sat down cold as a stone in his father's place. After awhile he rose and walked listlessly about, till at last his feet carried him through habit into his father's kitchen; on entering it his whole frame took a sudden thrill, for he found Rachael there tying up her bundle for a journey. She had heard his step, and her head was turned away from the door; but near her was a small round, old-fashioned mirror, and glancing into this Robert saw that tears were stealing down her face.

CHAPTER IV.

OLD Hathorn paced down the village with his oak stick, a happy man; but for all that he was a little mystified. But two hours ago Robert had told him he loved Rachael, and had asked his leave to marry her, and in answer to his angry, or to speak more correctly, his

violent refusal, had told him his heart was bound up in her, and he would rather die than marry any other woman. What could have worked such a sudden change in the young man's mind? "Maybe I shall find out," was his concluding reflection; and he was right; he did find out, and the information came from a most unexpected quarter. As he passed the village public-house he was hailed from the parlor-window; he looked up, and at it was Farmer Hickman, mug in hand. Now, to tell the truth, Hathorn was not averse to ale, especially at another man's expense, and, thought he, "Farmer is getting beery, looks pretty red in the face; I'll see if I can't pump something out of him about him and Rose." So he joined Hickman; and in about half an hour he also was redder in the face than nature intended.

If the wit is out when the wine is in, what must it be when the beer is in?

Old Hathorn and Hickman were much freer over their glass than they had ever been before, and Hathorn pumped Hickman; but inasmuch as Hickman desired to be pumped, and was rather cunninger half-drunk than sober, the old farmer drew out of him nothing about Rose, but he elicited an artful and villanous mixture of truth and falsehood about Rachael Wright; it was not a vague sketch like that with which he had destroyed Robert's happiness; it was a long, circumstantial history, full of discolored truths and equivoques, and embellished with one or two good honest lies; but of these there were not many; poor Richard could not be honest even in dealing with the Devil: a great error; since that personage is not to be cheated; honesty is your only card in any little transaction with him. The symposium broke up. Hickman's horse was led round; he mounted, bade Hathorn good day, and went off. In passing the

farm his red face turned black, and he shook his fist at it, and said, —

“Fight it out now amongst ye.” And the poisoner cantered away.

In leading Robert Hathorn and others so far, we have shot ahead of some little matters which must not be left behind, since without them the general posture which things had reached when Robert found Rachael tying up her bundle could hardly be understood.

When Mrs. Mayfield gave Hickman “the sack,” or as that coarse young man called it, “the bag,” she was in a towering passion, and not being an angel, but a female with decided virtues and abominable faults, she was just now in anything but a Christian temper, and woe to all who met her!

The first adventurer was Mr. Casenower: he saw her at a distance, for she had come out of the house in which she found she could hardly breathe, and came towards her with a face all wreathed in smiles. Mr. Casenower had of late made many tenders of his affection to her, which she had parried by positively refusing to see anything more than a jest in them; but Casenower, who was perfectly good-humored and light-hearted, had taken no offence at this, nor would he consider this sort of thing a refusal; in short, he told her plainly that it gave him great pleasure to afford her merriment, even at his own expense; only he should not leave off hoping until she took his proposal into serious consideration; that done, and his fate seriously pronounced, he told her she should find he was too much of a gentleman not to respect a lady’s will: only, when the final “No” was pronounced, he should leave the farm, since he could not remain in it and see its brightest attraction given to another. Here he caught her on the side of her good-nature, and she replied, “Well, I am not anybody’s yet.”

She said to herself, "The poor soul seems happy here, with his garden, and his farm of two acres, and his nonsense: and why drive the silly goose away before the time?" So she suspended the final "No," and he continued to offer admiration, and she to laugh at it.

It must be owned, moreover, that she began, at times, to have a sort of humorous terror of this man. A woman knows by experience that it is the fate of a woman not to do what she would like, and to do just what she would rather not, and often, though apparently free, to be fettered by cobwebs, and driven into some unwelcome corner by whips of gossamer. One day Mesdames Hathorn and Mayfield had looked out of the parlor-window into the garden, and there they saw Mr. Casenower, running wildly among the beds, with his hat in his hand.

"What is up now?" said Mrs. Mayfield, scornfully.

"I dare say it is a butterfly," was the answer; "he collects them."

"What a fool he is!"

"He is a good soul, for all that."

"Fools mostly are — Jane!" said Mrs. Mayfield, very solemnly.

"Yes, Rose!"

"Look at that man; look at him well, if *you* please. Of all the men that pester me, that is the one that is the most ridiculous in my eye. Ha! ha! the butterfly has got safe over the wall, I'm so glad; — Jane!"

"Well!"

"You mark my word — I sha'n't have the butterfly's luck."

"What do you mean?"

"That man is to be my husband! — that is all."

"La, Rose, how can you talk so? you know he is the last man you will ever take."

"Of course he is, and so he will take me; I feel he will; I can't bear the sight of him, so he is sure to be the man; you will see!—you will see!" and casting on her cousin a look that was a marvellous compound of fun and bitterness, she left the room brusquely, with one savage glance flung over her shoulder into the garden.

I do not say that such misgivings were frequent; this was once in a way; still it is characteristic, and the reader is entitled to it.

Mr. Casenower then came to Mrs. Mayfield, and presented her with a clove pink from his garden; he took off his hat with a flourish, and said, with an innocent but somewhat silly playfulness, "Accept this, fair lady, in token that some day you will accept the grower."

The gracious lady replied by slapping the pink out of his hand, and saying, "That is how I accept the pair."

Mr. Casenower colored very high, and the water came into his eyes; but Mrs. Mayfield turned her back on him, and flounced into her own house. When there, she felt she had been harsh, and looking out of the window, she saw poor Casenower standing dejected on the spot where she had left him; she saw him stoop and pick up the pink; he eyed it sorrowfully, placed it in his bosom, and then moved droopingly away.

"What a brute I am!" was the Mayfield's first reflection. "I hate you!" was the second.

So then, being discontented with herself, she accumulated bitterness, and in this mood flounced into the garden, for she saw Mrs. Hathorn there. When she reached her, she found that her cousin was looking at Rachael, who was cutting spinach for dinner while the old corporal, seated at some little distance, watched his granddaughter; and as he watched her, his dim eye lighted every now and then with affection and intelligence.

Mrs. Mayfield did not look at the picture; all she saw was Rachael; and after a few trivial words, she said to Mrs. Hathorn in an undertone, but loud enough to be heard by Rachael, "Are these two going to live with us altogether?"

Mrs. Hathorn did not answer; she colored and cast a deprecating look at her cousin: Rachael rose from her knees, and said to Patrick in an undertone, the exact counterpart of Mrs. Mayfield's: "Grandfather, we have been here long enough, come" — and she led him into the house.

There is a dignity in silent unobtrusive sorrow, and some such dignity seemed to belong to this village girl Rachael, and to wait upon all she said or did; and this seemed to put everybody in the wrong who did or said anything against her. When she led off her grandfather with those few firm sad words, in the utterance of which she betrayed no particle of anger or pique, Mrs. Hathorn cast a glance of timid reproach at her cousin, and she herself turned paler directly; but she replied to Mrs. Hathorn's look only by a disdainful toss of the head, and not choosing to talk upon the subject, she flounced in again and shut herself up in her own parlor — there she walked up and down like a little hyena. Presently she caught sight of the old farmer, standing like a statue, near the very place where Robert had left him after announcing his love for Rachael and his determination to marry no other woman. At sight of the farmer, an idea struck Mrs. Mayfield — "That Hickman is a liar after all; don't let me be too hasty in believing all this about Robert and that girl. I'll draw the farmer."

"I'll draw the farmer!" my refined reader is looking to me to explain the lady's phraseology. That which in country parlance is called "drawing," is also an art, O pencil — men that have lived thirty or forty years and

done business in this wicked world, learn to practise it at odd times. Women have not to wait for that; it is born with most of them an instinct, not an art. It works thus: you suspect something, but you don't know: you catch some one who does know, and you talk to him as if you knew all about it. Then, if he is not quite on his guard, he lets out what you wanted to know.

Mrs. Mayfield walked up to Hathorn with a great appearance of unpremeditated wrath, and said to him, "A fine fool you have been making of me, pretending your Robert looked my way, when he is over head and ears in love with that Rachael."

"Oh!" cried the farmer, "what, the fool has been and told you too!"

"So it is true, then?" cried the Mayfield sharply.

Machiavel No. 2 saw his mistake too late, and tried to hark back. "No: he is not over head and ears; it is all nonsense and folly; it will pass. You set your back to mine, and we will soon bring the ninny to his senses."

"I back you to force your son my way!" cried Rose in a fury; "what do I care for your son, or you either? Let him marry his Rachael. The donkey will find whether your mock-modest ones are better or worse than the frank ones — ha, ha!"

"Rose," cried the farmer, illumined with sudden hope, "if you know anything against her, you tell me, and I'll tell Robert."

"No," said she, throwing up her nose into the air in a manner pretty to behold; "I am no scandal-monger. It is your affair, not mine. Let him marry his Rachael. Ha, ha, oh!" and off she went, laughing with malice and choking with vexation.

There now remained to insult only Robert and Mrs. Hathorn. But the virago was afraid to scold Mrs. Hathorn, who she knew would burst out crying at the

first hard word, and then she would have to beg the poor soul's pardon; and Robert she could not find just then. Poor fellow, at this very moment he was writhing under Hickman's insinuations, and tearing his own heart to pieces in his efforts to tear Rachael from it.

So the Mayfield ran up-stairs to her own bedroom and locked herself in; for she did not want sense, and she began to see and feel that she was hardly safe to be about.

Meantime Rachael had come to take leave of Mrs. Hathorn. That good lady remonstrated, but feebly. She felt that there would never be peace now till the poor girl was gone. But she insisted upon one thing, — the old man, in his weak state, should not go on foot.

"You are free to go or stay for me, Rachael," said she, "but if you go, I will not have any harm come to the poor old man within ten miles of this door."

So, to get away, Rachael consented to take a horse and cart of the farmer's, and this is how it came about that Robert found Rachael tying up her bundle of clothes. Her tears fell upon her little bundle as she tied it.

CHAPTER V.

ROBERT HATHORN had found in Hickman's insinuations a natural solution of all that had puzzled him in Rachael. She was the deserted mistress of a man whom she still loved. Acting on this, he apologized to his father, placed his future fate with heart-sick indifference in that father's hands, and despaired of the female sex, and resigned all hope of heart-happiness in this world. But all this time Rachael had been out of sight. She stood now before him in person, and the sight of her, beautiful, retiring,

submissive, sorrowful, smote his heart and bewildered his mind. Looking at her, he could not see the possibility of this creature having ever been Hickman's mistress. He accused himself of having been too hasty. He would have given worlds to recall the words that had made his father so happy, and was even on the point of leaving the kitchen to do so ; but, on second thoughts, he determined to try and learn from Rachael herself whether there was any truth in Hickman's scandal, and if there was, to think of her no more.

"What are you doing, Rachael?"

"I am tying up my things to go, Master Robert."

"To go?"

"Yes. We have been a burden to your mother some time ; still, as I did the work of the house, I thought my grandfather would not be so very much in the way. But I got a plain hint from Mrs. Mayfield just now."

"Confound her!"

"No, sir ; we are not to forget months of kindness for a moment of ill-humor. So I am going, Mr. Robert, and now I have only to thank you for all your kindness and civility. We are very grateful, and wish we could make a return, but that is not in our power. But grandfather is an old man near his grave, and he shall pray for you by name every night, and so will I ; so then, as we are very poor, and have no hopes but from Heaven, it is to be thought the Almighty will hear us, and bless you, sleeping and waking, for being so good to the unfortunate."

Robert hid his face in his hands a moment. This was the first time she had ever spoken to him so warmly and so sweetly, and at what a moment of dark suspicion had these words come to him. Robert recovered himself, and said to Rachael, "Are you sure that is the real cause of your leaving us so sudden?"

Rachael looked perplexed. "Indeed, I think so, Mr. Robert. At least, I should not have gone this very day but for that."

"Ah, but you know very well you had made up your mind to go before that."

"Of course I looked to go some day. We don't belong here, grandfather and I."

"That is not it either. Rachael, there is an ill report sprung up about you."

"What is that, sir?" said Rachael, with apparent coldness.

"What is it? How can I look in your face and say anything to wound you?"

"Thank you, Mr. Robert. I am glad there is one that is inclined to show me some respect."

"Do something for me in return, dear Rachael; tell me your story, and I'll believe your way of telling it, not another's; but if you will tell me nothing, what can I do but believe the worst, impossible as it seems? Why are you so sorrowful? Why are you so cold like?"

"I have nothing to tell you, Mr. Robert; if any one has maligned me, may Heaven forgive them; if you believe them, forget me. I am going away. Out of sight, out of mind."

"What! can a girl like you, that has won all our respects, go away and leave scandal behind her? No! stay, and face it out, and let us put it down forever."

"Why should I trouble myself to do that, sir?"

"Because, if you do not, those who love you can love you no more."

Rachael sighed, but she wrapped herself in coldness, and replied, "But I want no one to love me."

"You don't choose that any one should ever marry you then?"

"No, Mr. Robert, I do not."

"You would not answer Richard Hickman so!"

"Richard Hickman!" said Rachael, turning pale.

When she turned pale, Robert turned sick.

"He says as much as that you could not say 'No' to him."

"Richard Hickman speaks of me to you!" cried Rachael, opening her eyes wildly. Then in a moment she was ice again. "Well, I do not speak of him!"

"Rachael," cried Robert, "what is all this? For heaven's sake, be frank with me. Don't make me tear the words out of you so; give me something to believe, or something to forgive. I should believe anything you told me: I am afraid I should forgive anything you had done."

"I do not ask you to do either, sir."

"She will drive me mad!" cried Robert frantically. "Rachael, hear me. I love you more than a woman was ever loved before! You talk of being grateful to me. I don't know why you should, but you say so. If you are, be generous, be merciful. I leave it to you. Be my wife! and then, perhaps, you will not lock your heart and your story from your husband. I cannot believe ill of you. You may have been maligned, or you may have been deceived, but you cannot be guilty. There!" cried he, wildly, "no word but one! Will you be my wife, Rachael?"

Rachael did not answer, at least in words; she wept silently.

Robert looked at her despairingly. At last he repeated his proposal almost fiercely: "I ask you, Rachael, will you be my wife?"

As he repeated this question, who should stand in the doorway but Mrs. Mayfield! She was transfixed, petrified, at these words of Robert, but, being a proud woman,

her impulse was to withdraw instantly, and hear no more. Ere she was out of hearing, however, Rachael replied, —

“Forgive me, Mr. Robert. I must refuse you.”

“You refuse to be my wife?”

“I do, sir!” but still she wept.

Mrs. Mayfield, as she retreated, heard the words, but did not see the tears. Robert saw the tears, but could not understand them. He gave a hasty, despairing gesture, to show Rachael that he had no more to say to her, and then he flung himself into a chair, and laid his brow on the table. Rachael glided softly away. At the door she looked back on Robert with her eyes thick with tears. She had hardly been gone a minute when Rose Mayfield returned, and came in and sat gently down opposite Robert, and watched him intently, with a countenance in which the most opposite feelings might be seen struggling for the mastery.

CHAPTER VI.

ROBERT lifted his head, and saw Mrs. Mayfield. He spoke to her sullenly: “So you turn away our servants?”

“Not I,” replied Mrs. Mayfield sharply.

“It is not we that send away Rachael, it is you.”

“I tell you, no; do you believe that girl before me?”

“You affronted her. What had she done to you?”

“I only just asked her, how long she meant to stay here, or something like that. Hang me if I remember what I said to her! They are a bad breed all these girls, haughty and spiteful; you can’t say a word, but they snap your head off.” Mrs. Mayfield said no more, for

at that moment Rachael came into the room with her grandfather and Mrs. Hathorn : this last appeared to be smoothing matters down.

"No, Daddy Patrick," said she in answer to some observation of the old man's, "nobody sends you away; you leave us good friends, and you are going to drink a cup of ale with us before you go."

A tray was then brought in and a jug of ale, and Patrick drank his mug of ale slowly; but Rachael put hers to her lips and set it down again.

Then Robert went and sat on the window-seat, and there he saw them bringing round the wagon to carry away Rachael and her grandfather. His heart turned dead-sick within him. He looked round for help, and looking round he saw Mrs. Mayfield bending on him a look in which he seemed to read some compassion, blended with a good deal of pique. In his despair he appealed to her: "There, they are really going; is it fair to send away like that folk that have behaved so well, and were minded to go of themselves, only mother asked them to stay? See how that makes us look; and you that were always so kind-hearted, Mrs. Mayfield. Rose, dear Rose!"

Mrs. Mayfield did not answer Robert, whose appeal was made to her in an undertone, but she said to Mrs. Hathorn, "Jane, the house is yours; keep them if it suits you, I am sure it is no business of mine."

"Oh, thank you, Rose," cried Robert; but his thanks were cut short by the voice of the elder Hathorn, who had just come in from the yard. "They are going," said he, "I make no complaint against them. There is no ill-will on either side; but I say they ought to go, and go they shall."

"Go they shall!" said the old corporal, with a mystified look.

The farmer spoke with a firmness and severity, and even with a certain dignity, and all felt he was not in a mood to be trifled with. Robert answered humbly — “Father, you are master here; no one gainsays you — but you are a just man. If you were to be cruel to the poor and honest, you would be sorry for it all your days.”

Before the farmer could answer, Rose Mayfield put in hastily, —

“There, bid them stay — you see your son holds to the girl, you will have to marry them one day or other, and so best — that will put an end to all the nonsense they talk about the boy and me. I dare say Robert is fool enough to think I wanted him for myself.”

“I — Mrs. Mayfield? Never. What makes you fancy that?”

“And,” cried Mrs. Mayfield, as if a sudden light broke in upon her, “what are we all doing here? we can’t help folks’ hearts. — Robert loves her. Are we to persecute Robert, an innocent lad, that never offended one of us, and has been a good son to you, and a good friend and brother to me ever since we could walk? I think the Devil must have got into my heart: but I shall turn him out, whether he likes or no. I say he shall have the girl, old man; and more than that, I have got a thousand pounds loose in Wallingford Bank: they shall have it to stock a farm; it is little enough to give Robert — I owe him more than that for Drayton, let alone years of love and good-will. There now, he is going to cry, I suppose. — Bob, don’t cry, for heaven’s sake; I can’t abide to see a man cry.”

“It is you make me, Rose, praising me just when everybody seemed to turn against me.”

“You are crying yourself, Rose,” whimpered Mrs. Hathorn.

"If I am, I don't feel it," replied Mrs. Mayfield.

Rachael trembled — but she said in her low, firm voice, "We are going away of our own accord, Mistress Mayfield, and we thank you kindly for this, and for all — but we are going away."

"You don't love Robert, then?"

"No, Mrs. Mayfield," said Rachael, with the air of one confessing theft or sacrilege, "I don't love Mr. Robert!" and she lowered her eyes with their long lashes, and awaited her sentence.

"Tell that to the men," replied Rose; "you can't draw the wool over a sister's eye, young lady."

"The young woman is the only one among you that has a grain of sense," said old Hathorn roughly. "Why don't you let her alone? — she would thank you for it."

"Can you read a woman's words, you old ass?" was the contemptuous answer.

"I am not an ass, young woman," said Hathorn gravely and sternly, "and I am in my house, which you seem to forget" — Rose colored up to the eyes — "and I am the master of it, so long as it is your pleasure I should be here."

"John!" cried Mrs. Mayfield, with a deprecating air.

"And I am that young man's father, and it is his duty to listen to me, and mine not to let him make a fool of himself. I don't pretend to be so particular as Robert is — used to be, I mean — and I was telling him only yesterday, that, suppose you have kicked over the traces a bit, as you have never broken your knees, least-ways to our *knowledge*, Rose, it did not much matter."

"Thank you, Daddy Hathorn; much obliged to you, I am sure."

"But there's reason in roasting of eggs: this one has been off the course altogether, and therefore I say again, she shows sense by going home, and you show no sense by trying to keep her here."

"Father," said Robert, "you go too far; we know nothing against Rachael, and till I know I won't believe anything."

"Why, Bob, I thought Hickman had told you all about it—I understood him so—ay, and he must too, or why did you come to me in the yard, and eat umble pie?"

"I don't know what you mean by telling me all about it, father; he hinted as much as that he and Rachael had been too familiar once upon a time."

"Well?"

"Well, how often has he told me the same of a dozen others? that is a common trick of Dick Hickman's, to pretend he has been thick with a girl, that perhaps does not know his face from Adam's. Father, I can't believe a known liar's tongue, against such a face as that."

"Face as that! it is a comely one, but seems to me it does not look us so very straight in the face just now; and there's more than a liar's tongue on t'other side: there's chapter and verse as the saying is."

"I don't understand your hints, and I don't believe that blackguard's. I am not so old as you, but I have learned that truth does not lie in hints."

"I'm older than you, and a woman's face can't make me blind and deaf to better witnesses."

"There are no better witnesses! For shame, father! Hickman is no authority with Hathorn."

"But the parish register is an authority," cried the old man sternly, and losing all his patience.

"The parish register?"

"And if you look at the parish register of Long Compton, you will find the name of a child she is the mother of, and no father to show."

"Father!"

"Ask herself — you see she doesn't deny it."

All eyes turned and fastened upon Rachael; and those who saw her at this moment will carry her face and her look to their graves, so fearful was the anguish of a high spirit ground into the dust and shame; her body seemed that moment to be pierced with a hundred poisoned arrows. She rose, white to her very lips, and stood in the midst of them quivering like an aspen-leaf, her eyes preternaturally bright and large, and she took one uncertain step forward, as if to fling herself on the weapons of scorn that seemed to hem her in; and she opened her mouth to speak, but her open lips trembled and trembled, and no sound came. And all the hearts round, even the old farmer's, began now to freeze and fear at the sight of this wild agony; and at last, after many efforts the poor soul would have said something, God knows what, but a sudden and most unexpected interruption came. Corporal Patrick was by her side, nobody saw how, and seizing her firmly by the arm, he forbade her to speak.

"Silence, girl!" cried the old soldier fiercely. "I dare you to say a word to any of them."

Then Rachael turned and clung convulsively to his shoulder, and trembled and writhed there in silence. All this while they had not observed the old man, or they would have seen that the mist had gradually cleared away from his faculties; his mind, brightened by his deep love for Rachael, was keenly awake to all that concerned her; and so her old champion stood in a moment by her side with scarce a sign left of age or weakness, upright and firm as a tower.

"Silence, girl! I dare you to say a word to any of them."

"There," sobbed Mrs. Hathorn, "you thought the poor old man was past understanding, and now you make him drink the bitter cup as well as her."

"Yes, I must drink my cup too," said old Patrick. "I thought I was going to die soon, and to die in peace; but I'll live and be young again, if it is but to tell ye ye are a pack of curs. The parish register! does the parish register tell you, the man married her with a wife living in another part? Is it wrote down along with that child's name in the parish register, how his father fell on his knees to his mother, a girl of seventeen, and begged for the dear life she wouldn't take the law of him and banish him the country? What was she to think? Could she think, that when his sick wife died he'd reward her for sparing him by flying the country not to do her right? The parish register! You welcome this scoundrel to your house, and you hunt his victim out like a vagabond, ye d——d hypocrites. Come, Rachael, let us crawl away home, and die in peace."

"No, no! you must not go like that," cried Mrs. Hathorn, and Robert rose and was coming to take his hand; but he waved his staff furiously over his head.

"Keep aloof, I bid ye all," he cried; "I have fought against Bonaparte, and I despise *small* blackguards." He seized Rachael and drew her to the door: then he came back at them again: "'Tisn't guilt you have punished; you have insulted innocence and hard fortune; you have insulted your own mothers, for you have insulted me that fought for them before the best and oldest of you was born—no skulking before the enemy, girl,"—for Rachael was drooping and trembling—"Right shoulders forward—MARCH!" and he almost tore her out of the house. He was great, and thundering, and terrible, in this moment of fury; he seemed a giant, and the rest but two feet high. His white hair streamed, and his eyes blazed defiance and scorn. He was great and terrible by his passion and his age, and his confused sense of past battles and present insult.

They followed him out almost on tiptoe. He lifted Rachael into the wagon, placed her carefully on a truss of hay in the wagon, and the carter came to the horses' heads, and looked to the house to know whether he was to start now.

Robert came out and went to Rachael's side of the wagon, but she turned her head away.

"Won't you speak to me, Rachael?" said Robert.

Rachael turned her head away and was silent.

"Very well," said Robert quietly, very quietly.

"Go on," cried old Hathorn.

The next moment there was a fearful scream from the women, and Robert was seen down among the horses' feet, and the carter was forcing them back, or the wagon would have been over him; the carter dragged him up; he was not hurt, but very pale; he told his mother, who came running to him, that he had felt suddenly faint and had fallen, and he gave a sickly smile and bade her not be frightened — he was better.

Rose Mayfield was as white as a sheet.

"Go on," cried the farmer again, and at a word from the carter the horses drew the wagon out of the yard, and went away down the lane with Rachael and Patrick.

They were gone.

CHAPTER VII.

CORPORAL PATRICK was correct in his details; the parish register gave a very vague outline of Rachael Wright's history. Mr. Hickman had gone through the ceremony of marrying her; nay, more, at the time he had firmly intended the ceremony should be binding, for his wife lay dying a hundred miles off, and Rachael had at

this period great expectations from her aunt, Mrs. Clayton. This Mrs. Clayton was the possessor of Bix Farm. She was a queer-tempered woman, and a severe economist; this did not prevent her allowing Patrick and Rachael a yearly sum, which helped to maintain them in homely comfort. And she used to throw out mysterious hints that, at her death, the pair would be better off than other relations of hers who dressed finer and held their heads higher at present. Unfortunately for Rachael this aunt was alive at the period when Hickman's bigamy was discovered by old Patrick. The said aunt had never done anything of the kind herself, nobody had ever married her illegally, and she could not conceive how such a thing could take place without the woman being in fault as well as the man; so she was very cross about it, and discontinued her good offices. The corporal wished to apply the law at once to Hickman; but he found means to disarm Rachael, and Rachael disarmed the old soldier. Rachael, young, inexperienced, and honest, was easily induced to believe in Hickman's penitence, and she never doubted that upon his wife's death, who was known to be incurably ill, Richard would do her ample right. So meantime she agreed to do herself injustice.

Mrs. Hickman died within a short time of the exposure; but unfortunately for Rachael, another person died a week or two before her, and that person was Rachael's aunt. No will appeared, except an old one which was duly cancelled by the old lady herself, in the following manner: First, all the words were inked out with a pen; secondly, most of them were scratched out with a knife; lastly, a formal document was affixed and witnessed, rendering the said instrument null as well as illegible. The mutilated testament bequeathed Bix Farm to Jack White, her graceless nephew. He had offended her after

the will was made, so she annulled the will. The graceless nephew could afford to smile at these evidences of wrath; he happened to be her heir-at-law, and succeeded to Bix in the absence of all testament to the contrary. Hickman was with his dying wife in Somersetshire. The news about Bix reached him, and he secretly resolved to have nothing more to do with Rachael. To carry out this with more security, the wretch wrote her affectionate letters from time to time, giving plausible excuses for remaining in Somersetshire; and so he carried on the game for three months after his wife was dead; he then quietly dropped the mask, and wrote no more.

So matters went on for some years, until one day the graceless nephew, finding work a bore, announced Bix Farm to let. Poor Hickman had set his heart upon this Bix, and as he could not have it for his own, he thought he should like to rent it, so he came up and made his offer, and was accepted as tenant. The rest the reader knows, I believe; but what iron passed through the hearts of Rachael and the old soldier all this time, that let me hope he knows not.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE events we have recorded had no sooner taken place, than a great change seemed to come over Mrs. Mayfield. She went about her avocations as usual, but not with the same alacrity; and her spirits were so unstrung, that every now and then she burst into tears. The female servants, honest country wenches that were not sublimely indifferent, like London domestics, to everybody in the house but themselves, seeing the gloom of the house, and Mrs. Mayfield continually cry-

ing who never cried before, began to whimper for sympathy, and the house was a changed house. Robert had disappeared; and they all felt it was a charity not to ask where, or to go near him for awhile: all but the mother, who could not resist the yearnings of a mother's nature; she crept silently at a distance, and watched her boy, lest perchance evil should befall him.

Mrs. Mayfield then, after many efforts to go through her usual duties, gave way altogether, and sat herself down in her own parlor, and cried over all the sorrow that had come on the farm; and, as all generous natures do, if you give them time to think, she blamed herself more than any one else, and wished herself dead and out of the way, if by that means the rest could only be made happy as they used to be. While she was in this mood, her head buried in her hands, she heard a slight noise, and, looking up, saw a sorrowful face at the door: it was Mr. Casenower.

"I am come to bid you good-by, Mrs. Mayfield."

"Come to bid me good-by?"

"Yes. All my things are packed up except this, which I hope you will do me the favor to accept, since I am going away and shall never tease you again."

"You never teased me that I know," said Mrs. Mayfield, very gently. "What is it, sir?"

"It is my collection of birds' eggs: will you look at it?"

"Yes. Why, here are a hundred different sorts, and no two kinds alike."

"No two kinds? I should think not. No two eggs, you mean."

"How beautiful they look when you see them in such numbers!"

"They are beautiful. Nature is very skilful; we don't take half as many hints from her as we might. Do you

observe these eggs all of one color — these delicate blues — these exquisite drabs? If you ever wish to paint a room, take one of these eggs for a model, and you will arrive at such tints as no painter ever imagined out of his own head, I know. I once hoped we should make these experiments together; but it was not to be. Good-by, dear Mrs. Mayfield!”

“Oh! Mr. Casenower, I did not think you came to quarrel with me.”

“Heaven forbid! But you love somebody else.”

“No; I don’t.”

“Yes: you know you do; and you rejected me this morning.”

“I remember I was rude to you, sir; I knocked a flower out of your hand. Does that rankle in your heart so long?”

“Mrs. Mayfield, it is for your sake I am going, not out of anger; you know that very well.”

“I know no such thing: it is out of spite; and a pretty time to show your spite, when my heart is breaking. If you want to please me, you would wait till I bid you go.”

“You don’t bid me go, then?”

“It doesn’t seem like it.”

“You bid me stay?”

“Not I, sir. Don’t let me keep you here against your will.”

“But it is not against my will; only you seemed to hate me this morning.”

“What signifies what I did this morning?” cried Mrs. Mayfield, sharply; “it is afternoon now. This morning they put me out; I wanted somebody to quarrel with: you came in my way, so I quarrelled with you. Now I have made you all unhappy, so I am miserable myself, as I deserve; and now I want somebody to com-

fort me, and you come to me: but instead of comforting me, all you can think of is to quarrel with me—oh! oh! oh!” This speech was followed by a flood of tears.

Casenower drew his chair close to hers, and took her hand, and promised to console her—to die for her if necessary.

“Tell me your trouble,” said he, “and you shall see how soon I will cure it, if a friend can cure it. Mrs. Mayfield—Rose—what is the matter?”

“Dear Mr. Casenower, Robert is in love with that Rachael—the farmer has insulted her, and sent her and her grandfather away—Robert is breaking his heart;—and all this began with a word of mine, though that blackguard Hickman is more to blame still. But I am a woman that likes to make people happy about me; I may say I live for that; and now they are all unhappy; and if I knew where to find a dose of poison, I would not be long before I would take it this day. I can’t bear to make folk unhappy—oh! oh! oh!”

“Don’t cry, dearest,” said Casenower; “you shall have your wish; you shall make everybody happy!”

“Oh, no, no! that is impossible now.”

“No such thing—there is no mischief that can’t be cured—look here, Rose, the old farmer is very fond of money; Rachael is poor; well, I am rich. I will soon find Robert a thousand pounds or two, and he shall have the girl he likes.”

“Ah, Mr. Casenower, if money could do it I should have settled it that way myself. Oh! what a good creature you are. I love you—no, I don’t, I hate you, because I see how all this is to end. No, no! we have insulted the poor things and set their hearts against us, and we have set poor Robert against the girl, who is worth the whole pack of us twice counted. They are gone, and the old man’s curse hangs like lead upon the house, and all in it.”

"Where are they gone?"

"Newbury way."

"How long?"

"An hour and a half."

"In two hours I'll have them back here."

"Don't be a fool now, talking nonsense."

"Will you lend me your mare?"

"Yes! no! The old farmer would kill us."

"Hang the old farmer! Who cares for him? Is this your house or his?"

"Mine, to be sure."

"Then I shall bring them to this house."

"Yes, but — but" —

"You have a right to do what you like in your own house, I suppose. Why, how scared you look! Where is all your spirit? You have plenty of it sometimes."

"Dear Mr. Casenower — don't tell anybody — I have not a grain of real spirit. I am the most chicken-hearted creature in the world: only I hide it when I fall in with other cowards, and so then I can bully them, you know. I have hectored it over you more than once, and so I would again; but it would be a shame, you are so good — and besides you have found me out now."

"Well! I am not afraid of anybody, if I can please you. I will ride after them and fetch them here, and if you are afraid to give them house-room, I will hire that empty house at the end of the lane, and this very night they shall be seated in a good house, by a good fire, before a good supper, within fifty yards of your door."

"Let me go with you. You don't know the way."

"Thank you; I should be sure to lose the way by myself; go and get your habit on. Lose no time. I will saddle the horses."

"How a man takes the command of us," thought Mrs. Mayfield. "I shall have to marry you for this, I suppose," said she, gayly, shining through her late tears.

"Not unless you like," said Casenower, proudly. "I don't want to entrap you, or take any woman against her will."

The Mayfield colored up to her eyes.

"You had better knock me down," said she. "I know you would like to," and, casting on her companion a glance of undisguised admiration, she darted up-stairs for her habit.

Ten minutes later she was in the saddle, and giving her mare the rein, she went after our poor travellers like a flash of lightning.

Casenower followed as he might.

CHAPTER IX.

It was a glorious evening: the sun, gigantic and red, had just begun to tip the clouds with gold, and rubies, and promises of a fine day to-morrow; the farm was quiet; the farmer's homely supper was set on a table outside the door, and he and his wife sat opposite each other in silence.

Mrs. Hathorn helped herself to a morsel; but she did not care to eat it, and, in fact, she only helped herself to encourage her husband to eat. She did not succeed; Farmer Hathorn remained in a brown study, his supper untasted before him.

"Eat your supper, husband."

"Thank you, wife; I am not hungry."

"Take a drop of beer, then."

"No, Jane, I am not dry."

"You are ill then, John; you don't look well."

"I'm well enough, I tell you."

"You are in trouble, like many more in this house."

"Me? No: I never was happier in my life."

"Indeed! What is there to be happy about?"

"Come, now, what is it?" cried the farmer, angrily.

"Out with it, and don't sit looking at me with eyes like a adder's."

"My man, you see your conscience in your wife's eyes; that is all the venom they have."

"You had better tell me Robert is in his senses to love that girl. I would cut my arm off at the shoulder sooner than consent to it."

"Would you cut your son off sooner?" said Mrs. Hathorn, with forced calmness.

"What do you mean?"

"You take very little notice of what passes, John."

"What do you mean?"

"Didn't you see what Robert tried for when the wagon started with them?"

"Oh, about his fainting! I could have kicked the silly fool if I hadn't been his father."

"Don't you think it is very odd he should faint like that; just under the wheel of a wagon?"

"Oh! when a chap swoons away he can't choose the bed he falls on."

"A moment more, the wheel would have been on his head; if Thomas hadn't been lightsome¹ and stopped the horses all in a minute, Robert Hathorn would have been a corpse in this house."

"Well!"

"Well!"

The man lowered his voice: "You had better tell me you think he did it on purpose!"

¹ Pronounced lissome.

Mrs. Hathorn leaned over the table to him.

"I don't think it, John; I am sure of it. Robert never fainted at all; he was as white as his shirt, but he knew what he was about from first to last. He chose his time; and when Rachael turned her head from him, he just said, 'Very well, then,' and flung himself under the wheel. What did Thomas say, who dragged him up from the horses' feet?"

"I don't know," said old Hathorn, half sulkily, half trembling.

"He said, 'That is flying in the face of Heaven, young master.' Jane heard him say it; and you know Thomas is a man that speaks but little. What did Rose Mayfield say, as she passed him next minute? 'Would you kill your mother, Robert, and break all our hearts?' You cried out, 'Go on — go on.' Robert said his foot had slipped; and made as though he would smile at me. Ah! what a smile, John! If you had been as near it as I was, you wouldn't sleep this night." And Mrs. Hathorn began to sob violently, and rocked herself to and fro.

"Then send for them back," cried the farmer, suddenly starting up. "Send, before worse ill comes — confound them!"

"They will never come back here. They are poor, but honest and proud; and we have stung them too bitterly, reproaching them with their hard lot."

"Where is he?" whispered the farmer.

"In the barn; with his face buried in the straw, like one who wouldn't speak, or see, or hear the world again."

"Mayhap he is asleep?"

"No, he is not asleep."

"Give him time; he'll come to when he has cried his bellyful."

"He shed tears? Oh, no! it is too deep for that; he

will die by his own hand, or fret to death. He won't be long here, I doubt: look for dark days, old man!"

"Wife," said Hathorn, trembling, "you are very hard upon me: to hear you, one would say I am a bad father, and am killing my son."

"No — no — John! But we were too ambitious, and we have humbled the poor and the afflicted; and Heaven does not bless them that do so, and never will."

"I don't know what to do, Jane."

"No more do I, except pray to God: that is my resource in dangers and troubles."

"Ay! ay! that can do no harm any way."

While the old couple sat there with gloomy and foreboding hearts, suddenly a cheerful cry burst upon their ears. It was Mrs. Mayfield's voice; she came cantering up the lane with Mr. Casenower; she dismounted, flung him the bridle, and ran into her own house, where she busied herself in giving orders and preparing two rooms for some expected visitors. A few minutes more, and, to the astonishment of Hathorn and delight of his wife, the wagon hove in sight with Rachael and Patrick.

They descended from the wagon, and were led by Mr. Casenower into Mrs. Mayfield's house, and there, after all this day's fatigues and sorrows, they found a welcome and bodily repose. But Rachael showed great uneasiness; she had been very reluctant to return; but Mrs. Mayfield had begged them both so hard, with the tears in her eyes, and Patrick had shown so strong a wish to come back, that she had yielded a passive consent. When the news of their return was brought to Robert by his mother, he betrayed himself to her; he threw his arms around her neck like a girl — but in his downcast look, and dogged manner, none of the others could discover whether he was glad or sorry. He went about his work, next morning, as usual, and did not even make an inquiry about Rachael.

It was about twelve o'clock the next day, that Mrs. Mayfield observed him return from the field, and linger longer than usual in the neighborhood of the house. She invited Rachael to come and look at her pet calf, and walked her most treacherously right up to Robert.

"Oh!" cried she, "you must excuse me, here is Robert, he will do as well. Robert, you take and show her my calf, the red and white one, that's a good soul; they want me in-doors." And in a moment she was gone, and left Robert and Rachael looking alternately at each other and the ground.

When Rose left these two together she thought, innocently enough, that the business was half done, as far as they were concerned. She had not calculated the characters of the parties, and their pride. They were little nearer each other now than at twenty miles distant.

"Well, Rachael," said Robert, "I am glad you are here again. They were wrong to insult you, and now they are right to bring you back; but it is no business of mine."

"No, Master Robert," said Rachael quietly, "and it is against my will I am here."

With these words she was moving away, when Robert intercepted her, and, intercepting her, said, "Oh! I don't hinder you to stay or to go. The folk say a heap of things about you and me; but did I ever say a word to you more than civility?"

"No; nor would I have suffered it."

"Oh, you are proud; it suits your situation," said Robert bitterly.

"A man and a Christian would think twice ere he reminded me of my situation," cried Rachael, with flashing eyes; "and since you can't feel for it, why speak to me at all?"

"I did not mean to affront you," said Robert, with feeling. "I pity you."

"Keep your pity for one that asks it," was the spirited reply.

"What! are we to worship you?"

"Misfortune that does not complain should meet some little respect, I think."

"Yes, Rachael; but it would be more respected if you had not kept it so close."

"Master Robert," answered Rachael, in what we have already described as her dogged manner, "poor folk must work, and ought to work; and, as they won't let a girl in my situation, as you call it, do work or be honest, I concealed my fault, if fault it was of mine."

"And I call it cruel to let a man love you, and hide your story from him."

"Nay, but I never encouraged any man to love me, so I owe my story to no man."

"Keep your secrets, then," said Robert, savagely; "nobody wants them, without it is Richard Hickman. I hear his cursed voice in the air somewhere."

"Richard Hickman!" gasped Rachael. "Oh, why did I come to this place to be tortured again?"

Richard Hickman had come here expressly to have a friendly talk with Mr. Patrick. Mr. Patrick owed this honor to the following circumstance:—

As the wagon returned to the farm, Thomas had stopped at a certain wayside public-house in which Mr. Hickman happened to be boozing. Patrick was breathing threats against Hickman, and insisting on Rachael's taking the law of him, and sending him out of the country. Rachael, to get rid of the subject, yielded a languid assent, and Hickman, who was intently listening, trembled in his shoes. To prevent this calamity the prudent Richard determined to make a pseudo-spontaneous offer of some sort to the corporal, and hush up the whole affair.

At sight of Hickman the corporal was for laying on,

as our elder dramatists have it ; but Mr. Casenower, who was there, arrested his arm, and proposed to him to hear what the man had to say.

"Well," cried Patrick, "let him speak out, then, before them all — they have all seen us affronted through his villany. Where is Rachael ?"

So then the corporal came round to where Rachael stood, pale as death ; and Robert sat pale, too, but clenching his teeth like one who would die sooner than utter a cry, though many vultures, called passions, were gnawing the poor lad's heart at this moment. And, to make matters worse, both Mr. and Mrs. Hathorn, seeing this assemblage, were drawn by a natural curiosity to join the group.

And here Mr. Hickman's brass enabled him to cut a more brilliant figure than his past conduct justified. He cast a sly, satirical look at them, especially at poor Robert, and, setting his back to the railings, he opened the ball thus :—

"I come to speak to Mrs. Mayfield ; she says, 'Speak before all the rest.' With all my heart. I come to say three words to Mr. Patrick ; 'Speak before all the rest,' says he. Well, why not ? It is a matter of taste. Mr. Patrick, I have done you wrong, and I own it ; but you have had your revenge. You have told the story your way, and the very boys are for throwing stones at me here, and you have set Mrs. Mayfield against me, that used to look at me as a cat does at cream."

"As a cat does at water, you mean — you impudent, ugly dog !"

"Keep your temper, my darling ; you were for having everything said in public, you know. Well, now let us two make matters smooth, old man. How much will you take to keep your tongue between your teeth after this ?"

Patrick's reply came in form of a question addressed to the company in general:—

"Friends, since Corporal Patrick of the Forty-seventh Foot was ill amongst you, and partly out of his senses, has he done any dirty action, that this fellow comes and offers him money in exchange for good name?"

"No, Mr. Patrick," said Robert, breaking silence for the first time. "You are an honest man, and a better man than ever stood in Dick Hickman's shoes."

Hickman bit his lip, and cast a wicked glance at Robert.

"And your daughter is as modest a lass as ever broke bread, for all her misfortunes," cried Mrs. Hathorn.

"And none but a scoundrel would hope to cure the mischief he has done with money," cried the Mayfield.

"Spare me, good people," said Hickman, ironically.

"Ay, spare him," said Patrick, simply. "I have spared him this five years for Rachael's sake; but my patience is run out," roared the old man, and, lifting his staff, he made a sudden rush at the brazen Hickman. Casenower and old Hathorn interposed.

"Let him alone," said Hickman, "you may be sure I sha'n't lift my hand against fourscore years. I'll go sooner," and he began to saunter off.

"What! you are a coward as well, are you?" roared Patrick. "Then I pity you. Begone, ye lump of dirt, with your idleness, your pride, your meanness, your money, and the shame of having offered it to a soldier like me that has seen danger and glory."

"Well done, Mr. Patrick," cried Hathorn, "that is an honor to a poor man to be able to talk like that."

"Yes, Mr. Patrick, that was well said."

"It is well said, and well done."

Every eye was now bent with admiration on Patrick, and from him they turned with an universal movement

of disdain to Hickman. The man writhed for a moment under this human lightning difficult to resist, and then it was he formed a sudden resolution that took all present by surprise. Conscience pricked him a little, Rachael's coldness piqued him, jealousy of Robert stung him, general disdain annoyed him, and he longed to turn the tables on them all. Under this strange medley of feelings and motives, he suddenly wheeled round and faced them all, with an air of defiance that made him look much handsomer than they had seen him yet, and he marched into the middle of them.

"I'll show you all I am not so bad as you make me out—you listen, old man—Rachael, you say that you love me still, and that 'tis for my sake you refuse Bob Hathorn, as I believe it is, and the Devil take me if I won't marry you now, for all that is come and gone." He then walked slowly and triumphantly past Robert Hathorn, looking down on him with superior scorn, and he came close up to Rachael, who was observed to tremble as he came near her. "Well, Rachael, my lass, I am Richard Hickman, and I offer you the ring before these witnesses. Say yes, and you are mistress of Bix Farm—and Mrs. Hickman. Oh, I know the girl I make the offer to," added he, maliciously; "if you could not find out what she is worth, I could. Where are you all now?—name the day, Rachael, here is the man."

Rachael made no answer.

It was a strange situation, so strange that a dead silence followed Hickman's words. Marriage offered to a woman before a man's face who had tried to kill himself for her but yesterday, and offered by a man who had neglected her entirely for five years, and had declined her under more favorable circumstances. Then the motionless silence of the woman so addressed—

they all hung upon her lips, poor Mr. Casenower not excepted, who feared that, now Rachael was to be Mrs. Hickman, Robert might turn to Mrs. Mayfield and crush his new-raised hopes.

As for Robert, he did everything he could to make Rachael say "Yes" to Hickman. He called up a dogged look of indifference, and held it on his face by main force. It is to be doubted, though, whether this imposed on Rachael. She stole a single glance at him under her long lashes, and at last her voice broke softly but firmly on them all, and it sounded like a bell, so hushed were they all, and so highly strung was their attention and expectation.

"I thank you, Richard Hickman, but I decline your offer."

"Are you in earnest, little girl?"

"Rachael," said Patrick, "think — are you sure you know your own mind?"

"Grandfather, to marry a man I must swear in the face of Heaven to love and honor him. How could I respect Richard Hickman? If he was the only man left upon the earth, I could not marry him, and I would not. I would rather die!"

Robert drew a long breath.

"You have got your answer," said Patrick, "so now, if I was you, I'd be off."

"If I don't, I'm a fool. I shall go to my uncle: he lives ninety miles from here, and you'll see I shall get a farm there and a wife and all — if so be you don't come there a-reaping, Mr. Patrick."

"Heaven pardon you, then," said the old man, gravely. "You are but young; remember it is not too late to repair your ill-conduct to us by good conduct to others; so now good-aaturnoon."

"Good-aaturnoon, Daddy Patrick," said Hickman,

with sudden humility. "Your servant, all the company," added he, taking off his hat. So saying, he went off. He had no sooner turned the corner than he repented him of the manner of his going; so, putting his hands in his pockets, he whistled the first verse of "The Plough-boy," until out of hearing. As these last sounds of Hickman died away, they all looked at one another in silence. Old Hathorn was the first to speak.

"That was uncommon spirity to refuse Hickman," said he, bluntly, "but you have too much pride, both of you."

"No, not I, farmer," said the old man, sorrowfully. "I have been proud, and high-spirited too; but it is time that passed away from me. I am old enough to see from this world into another, and from this hour to my last (and that won't be long, I hope), I am patient; the sky is above the earth; my child has had wrong — cruel, bitter, undeserved wrong; but we will wait for Heaven's justice, since man has none for us: and we will take it when it comes, here or hereafter."

The fiery old man's drooping words brought the water into all their eyes, and Robert, in whose mind so sore a struggle had been raging, sprang to his feet.

"You speak well," he cried, "you are a righteous man, and my ill-pride falls before your words; it is my turn to ask your daughter of you. Rachael, you take me for husband and friend for life. I loved you well enough to die for you, and now I love you well enough to live for you; Rachael, be my wife — if *you* please."

"She won't say 'No' this time," cried Rose Mayfield, archly.

"Thank you, Robert," said Rachael, mournfully. "I am more your friend than to say 'Yes.'"

"Rachael," cried Mrs. Hathorn, "if it is on our account, I never saw a lass I would like so well for daughter-in-law as yourself."

"No, mother," said Robert; "it is on account of father. Father, if you will not be offended, I shall put a question to you that I never thought to put to my father. Have I been a good son or a bad son to you these eight and twenty years?"

"Robert!" cried the old man, in a quivering tone, that showed these simple words had gone through and through his heart. Then he turned to Rachael: "My girl, I admire your pride; but have pity on my poor boy and me."

"And on yourself," put in Mrs. Mayfield.

"May Heaven bless you, Mr. Hathorn!" said Rachael. "If I say 'No' to Robert, I have a reason that need offend no one. Folk would never believe I was not in fault; they would cast his wife's story in his teeth, and sting us both to death; for he is proud, and I am proud too. And what I have gone through — oh! it has made me as bitter as gall — as bitter as gall!"

"Rachael Wright," cried the old corporal sternly, "listen to me!"

"Rachael Wright!" yelled Casenower. "Oh! gracious heavens! — Rachael Wright — it is — it must be. I knew it was an odd combination — I got it into my head it was 'Rebecca Reid' — is this Rachael Wright, sir?"

"Of course it is," said the corporal, peevishly.

"Then I have got something for her from my late partners. I'll find it — it is at the bottom of my seeds," and away scampered Casenower.

He presently returned, and interrupted a rebuke Mr. Patrick was administering to Rachael, by giving her a long envelope. She opened it with some surprise, and ran her eye over it, for she was what they call in the county a capital scholar. Now as she read, her face changed and changed like an April sky, and each change

was a picture and a story. They looked at her in wonder as well as curiosity. At last a lovely red mantled in her pale cheek, and a smile like a rainbow, a smile those present had never seen on her face, came back to her from the past. The paper dropped from her hands as she stretched them out, like some benign goddess or nymph, all love, delicacy, and grace.

"Robert," she cried, and she need have said no more, for the little word "Robert," as she said it, was a volume of love; "Robert, I love, I always loved you. I am happy — happy — happy!" and she threw her arm round Robert's neck, and cried and sobbed, and, crying and sobbing, told him again and again how happy she was.

"Hallo!" cried Hathorn, cheerfully, "wind has shifted in your favor, apparently, Bob."

Mrs. Mayfield picked up the paper. "This has done it," cried she, and she read it out *pro bono*. The paper contained the copy of a will made by Rachael's aunt, a year before she died. The sour old lady, being wrath with Rachael on account of her misconduct in getting victimized, but not quite so wrath as with her graceless nephew, had taken a medium course. She had not destroyed this will, as she did the other, by which graceless nephew was to benefit, but she hid it in the wall, safe as ever magpie hid thimble, and dying somewhat suddenly, she died intestate to all appearance. This old lady was immeasurably fond of the old ramshackly house she lived in. So, after awhile, to show his contempt of her, graceless nephew had the house pulled down; the workmen picked out of the wall the will in question. An old servant of the lady, whom graceless nephew had turned off, lived hard by, and was sorrowfully watching the demolition of the house, when the will was picked out. Old servant read the

will, and found herself down for one hundred pounds. Old servant took the will to a firm of solicitors, no other than Casenower's late partners. They sent down to Rachael's village; she and Patrick were gone; a neighbor said they were reaping somewhere in Oxfordshire. The firm sent a copy of the will to Casenower as a forlorn hope, and employed a person to look out for Rachael's return to her own place, as the best chance of doing business with her. By the will, two thousand pounds and Bix Farm were bequeathed to Rachael.

"Bix Farm! Three hundred acres!" cried Hathorn.

"Bix Farm — the farm Hickman is on," cried Rose Mayfield. "Kick him out; he has no lease. If you don't turn him out neck and crop before noon to-morrow, I'm a dead woman."

"The farm is Robert's," said Rachael; "and so is all I have to give him, if he will accept it." And though she looked at Mrs. Mayfield, she still clung to Robert.

Robert kissed her, and looked so proudly at them all! "Have I chosen ill?" said Robert's eyes.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN everybody sees how a story will end, the story is ended.

Robert and Rachael live on their own farm, Bix; Corporal Patrick sits by their fireside.

People laugh at Mr. Casenower's eccentricities; but it is found unsafe to laugh at them in presence of Mrs. Casenower, late Mayfield.

I think I cannot conclude better than by quoting a few words that passed between Mrs. Hathorn and Cor-

poral Patrick, as they all sat round one table that happy evening.

"Rose," said this homely good creature, "I do notice that trouble comes to all of us at one time or other; and I think they are the happiest that have their trouble (like these two children) in the morning of their days."

"Ay, dame," said the corporal, taking up the word, "and after that a bright afternoon, and a quiet evening — as mine will be now, please God!"

Friendly reader (for I have friendly as well as unfriendly readers), I do not wish you a day without a cloud, for you are human, and I, though a writer, am not a humbug. But, in ending this tale, I wish you a bright afternoon, and a tranquil evening, and above all a clear sky when the sun goes down.

II.

THE BLOOMER.

CHAPTER I.

PROPRIA quæ maribus tribuuntur mascula dicas.

Free Trans.—The things that are proper to males you may call masculine.

JOHN COURTENAY was the son of Richard Courtenay. Richard was the younger son of a good Devonshire family: his elder brother inherited four thousand a year—he, fifteen hundred pounds down from the same relative, his father—*vive l'Angleterre!*

His fifteen hundred pounds wouldn't do in a genteel country like England; so he went to America and commerce. He died richer than the owner of Courtenay Court.

John, his son, was richer still by the same honorable means.

He was also a stanch republican. The unparalleled rise and grandeur of the United States might well recommend their institutions to any candid mind; and John Courtenay spent his leisure moments in taking the gloss off John Bull's hide. He was not so spiteful against him as some of those gentry who owe their cleverness to themselves, but their existence to Bull and forget it: his line was rather cool contempt. The old country was worn out and decayed; it was progressing like a crab instead of going ahead, etc.

For all this, one fine day something seemed to crack inside John Courtenay's bosom when he saw an announcement from the modest pen of Robins, that Courtenay Court was in the market.

He did not think such an advertisement would have interested him any more than consols ninety-six and a half — but it did.

This gentleman was at the moment working a loan at five per cent with Kentucky; and he had promised himself to be in it to the tune of fifty thousand pounds: but all this day he took more snuff than was good for him, and the next day after breakfast and a reverie he suddenly burst out, "Pshaw! the worst investment in the worst country: a sinking interest in a sinking kingdom."

"Papa!" said a musical voice, "your paying me no attention will, I fear, end in your being worried."

This worrying meant a certain violent system of kissing with which the speaker used to fall upon John Courtenay when he was very good or very bad; she used it indifferently as a reward or punishment.

This time, to her surprise, the old gentleman answered her smiling threat by opening his arms in a moment and saying, "My child!"

In another moment Caroline Courtenay was in his arms: he pressed his lips to her brow, and said, "I will do it! I will do it!"

"What will you do, papa?"

"That is my business, I reckon," said he, recovering the statesman and man of business with rather a brusque reaction — and off he bustled to Wall Street, "where merchants most do congregate."

Caroline stood irresolute, and had a mind to whimper — she thought her affection had been for once half repulsed.

Caroline! doubt anything, everything, but a parent's love for his only child.

CHAPTER II.

IN three weeks after this the hammer came to Courtenay Court, and that hammer was wielded (I use the term he would have selected) by the St. George of the auction room.

Need I say the wood and water of the estate had previously been painted in language as flowing as the one and as exuberant as the foliage of the other?

In the large hall were two fireplaces where piles of beech-log blazed and crackled.

Mr. Robins made his bow, and up went Courtenay Court, manor and lordship, in a single lot.

There were present, besides farmers, some forty country gentlemen, many of whom looked business: they had not examined their own horizon as John Courtenay, merchant, had. Land was in vogue.

I don't wonder at it.

Certainly a landed estate is "an animal with its mouth always open." But compare the physical perception and enjoyment of landed wealth with that of consols and securities.

Can I get me rosy cheeks, health, and good-humor, riding up and down my Peruvian bonds; can I go out shooting upon my parchment, or in summer sit under the shadow of my mortgage deed, and bob for commas and troll for semicolons in my river of ink that meanders through my meadow of sheepskin?

Wherefore I really think land will always tempt even the knowing ones, until some vital change shall take

place in society : for instance, till the globe makes its exit in smoke and the blue curtain comes down on the creation.

Three or four gentlemen held the bidding up till about thirty thousand pounds ; it then became flat.

And now one Adam Eaves, a farmer, pushed sheepishly forward, made an advance on the bidding, and looked ashamed.

Why lookest thou ashamed, O yeoman, bulwark of our isle ?

This is why. Adams Eaves farmed two farms ; and he had for three years been praying his landlords for a decrease of rent, upon grounds that nowise tallied with his little offer of thirty thousand one hundred pounds down on the nail for Courtenay Manor ; and therefore looked he ashamed, the simple-minded yeoman, bulwark of our isle.

Joshua Tanner, linen-draper in the market-town, he whose cry for ten years had been the decay of retail trade, was so surprised at this that thrown off his guard he bid an hundred more — but the mask once thrown off, he blushed not, but sprinkled insulting arrogance on all around.

Both these worthies, who, unlike us writers, had for years announced themselves beneath their true value, gave way to heavier metal, and the estate began to approach its real worth. It was at thirty-eight thousand pounds.

There was a pause. St. George looked jocose, and felt uneasy : were they running cunning like their own hounds, these South country gentlemen ?

He now looked carefully all round the room : a long attenuated figure with a broad-brimmed hat on, standing by a distant window, met his eye, and, as if to oblige him, now for the first time made a cool *nonchalant* bid

by nodding his head — round went all the company on their heels with their backs to the auctioneer, as, when in the last row of the pit two personages of this our day go to fisticuffs, I have seen the audience turn its back on the quarrel of Brutus and Cassius, or Melantius and Amyntor.

Forty-two, three, four thousand were reached — two country gentlemen bidders turned red and white — the pin bid on, rhythmically, at measured intervals, like a chaff-cutting machine, unconscious of opposition, indifferent to result.

The estate was now at thirty years' purchase; a hum that went round the room announced this fact without a word spoken — all the hounds had tailed off but one. He went on. The two bidders were strangely contrasted: it seemed odd they could both want the same thing. In shape one was like a pin: the other a pin-cushion.

Our friend at the window was all one color, like wash-leather, or an actor by daylight; the other, with his head of white hair as thick as a boy's, and his red-brown cheeks, and his bright eye, reflected comfort as brightly as Hampton Court with its red brick and white facings, and cheered the eye like old Sun and old Frost battling for a December day.

At last the thin and sallow personage uttered these words: "Forty-seven thousand pounds!" in a nasal twang that seemed absurdly unjust to the grand ideas such words excite in elegant minds conscious how many refined pleasures can be had for forty-seven thousand pounds.

His antagonist's head sunk for a moment.

He sighed, and instead of bidding higher or holding his tongue, the two business alternatives open to him, he said, "Then it will never be mine!"

He said this so simply, yet with so much pain, that some of those good souls, who unless they have two days to think over it with their wives or sisters, are sure to take the pathetic for the ludicrous, horse-laughed at him.

He turned away. Mr. Robins did not waste a second in idle flourishes; when a thing is settled, end it, thought he: he knocked the lot down now as he would a china tea-pot in a sale of two hundred lots — and the old oaks of Courtenay bowed their heads to a Yankee merchant.

The buyer stepped up to the auctioneer.

Mr. Ralph Seymour, the last bidder, made for the door — at the door he buttoned with difficulty his coat over his breast, for his heart was swelling and his eye glistened. It was a bitter disappointment — we who live in towns can hardly think how bitter. Such sales do not come every day in the country: his estate marched for a mile and a half with the Courtenays. He had counted on no competition but that of his neighbors, he had bought it from them: but a man who happened to want an estate had come from London, or, as it was now whispered, from New York.

Any other estate would have suited *him* as well, but he *would* have this.

Poor old gentleman, he had told Mrs. Seymour she should walk this evening under the great birch-trees of the Courtenays — and they be hers!

They had been married forty years, and he had never broken his word to her before.

The auctioneer read the buyer's card.

"Sold to Mr. Jonathan Sims," — said he.

"Ugh!" went one or two provincials, and then dead silence.

"Acting," continued the auctioneer, "for MR. JOHN COURTENAY OF NEW YORK."

There was a pause — a hurried buzz — and then, to Mr. Sims's surprise, a thundering "Hurrah" burst out that made the rafters ring and the windows rattle.

"It's Master Richard's son," shouted Adam Eaves. "My father's ridden many's the time with Master Richard, he rode the mule, and father the jenny-ass after Squire Courtenay's hounds, HURRAH!"

Omnes. Hurraih!

The thorough-bred old John Bull at the door, Mr. Ralph Seymour, seemed glad of an excuse to get rid of some bile foreign to his nature. In three strides he was alongside Jonathan, and had he been French it was plain he would have said something neat, but as he was only English he grasped Mr. Sims's hand like a vise — and — asked him to dinner.

That is the English idea, — you must ask a gentleman to dinner; and you must give a poor man a day's work — that wins him.

John Courtenay came home: I omit the objections he took, *chemin faisant*, to things in the old country. They would fill a volume with just remonstrance.

He came to his own lodge-gate; the old man who opened it sung out, —

"Oh! Master John, how like you be to Master Richard surely."

Courtenay was astonished: he found this old boy had been thinking of him all that way off for sixty years, ever since his birth transpired.

The old housekeeper welcomed him with tears in her eyes.

He dined in a room enriched with massive old carvings, he walked after dinner under his avenue of birches with silver stems of gigantic thickness and patriarchal age. The housekeeper put him in a bed his father had slept in when a boy.

Soon the country gentlemen made acquaintance with him. The strong idea of distributive justice he had brought from commerce, and his business habits, caused him to be consulted and valued.

It is a fact that after some months in Devonshire he developed a trait or two of Toryism, but they could not make him believe that nations are the property of kings, and countries their home farms. They did all they could think of to corrupt him.

They made him perforce a justice of the peace. He remonstrated and pooh-poohed, but was no sooner one than he infused fresh blood into the withered veins of justice in his district. He became a referee in all nice matters of rural equity. In short, his neighbors had all overcome any little prejudice, and had learned his value when — they lost him. His time was come to close an honorable life by a peaceful death.

Short as had been his career among them, the whole county followed him to his resting-place among the Courtenays in Conyton church vault.

He left all his land and all his money by will to his daughter. To his will he attached a paper containing some requests.

One was that she would provide for the aged housekeeper and lodgekeeper, who knew his father, and welcomed him home: he called it home. But there was nothing about where he wished her to live. He did not decide the great little question: is America or England the right place for us globules to swell and burst in?

In other words, when he wrote this letter John Courtenay was dying, and thought less about the kingdom whence came his root, or the State where his flowers had bloomed, than of a country he had learned to look towards by being neither Yankee nor Briton so much as an honest, God-fearing man; so his thoughts were now upon a land

older than little England, broader than the great United States, — a land where Americans and English are brothers.

And I warn them and all men to be brothers here, lest they never see that land.

Caroline Courtenay remained at New York. There was little to tempt her to leave her birthplace, and visit the country which seemed to her to have robbed her of her father. It happened, however, about three years after Mr. Courtenay's death, that a fresh circumstance changed her feeling in that respect.

Young Reginald Seymour, who had come to see the States, had brought letters of introduction to her, and had prolonged his stay from a fortnight to eight months. And he was eloquent in praise of Courtenay Court, and of his father's place, which adjoined it; and what Reginald praised, Caroline desired to see.

Miss Courtenay combined two qualities which are generally seen in opposition — beauty and wit. On her wit, however, she had latterly cast some doubt by a trick she had fallen into.

She had been detected thinking for herself. Ay, more than once.

This came of being left an orphan, poor thing. She had no one to warn her, day by day, against this habit, which is said always to lead her sex into trouble when they venture upon it. Luckily, they don't do it very often.

Wealth, wit, and beauty meeting with young blood were enough to spoil a character. All they had done in this case was to give her a more decided one than most young ladies of her age have, or could carry without spilling.

It so happened, one day, that a question much agitated in parts of the United States occupied a semicircle of

ladies, of whom Miss Courtenay was one. This was a new costume introduced by a highly respectable lady, the editor of a paper called the *Lily*, and wife of a lawyer of some eminence at Seneca Falls.

The company generally were very severe on this costume, and proceeded upwards from the pantalets to the morals of the inventor, which, though approved at Seneca by simple observation, were depreciated at New York by intelligent inference.

When the conversation began, Miss Courtenay looked down on the bare idea of the bloomer costume.

But its vituperators shook her opinion by a very simple process, — they gave their reasons.

"It is awkward and absurd," said one, as, by way of contrast, she glided majestically to the piano to sing. As she spoke her foot went through her dress, to the surprise of — nobody.

"It is highly indelicate to expose any portion of the — in short, the — the — the — ankle," continued the lady at the piano.

"It is, Miss Jemima," purred a smooth, deferential gentleman, looking over her. His eye dwelt complacently on two snowy hemispheres.

A little extravagance injures a good cause.

At last Miss Courtenay, fired by opposition and unreasonable reasons, began to favor the general theory of bloomer.

Next she converted several friends, still to the theory only. This got wind, and a general attack was made on her by her well-wishers. Their arguments and sneers completed the business, and she was pretty far gone in bloomerism when the following scene took place in her own kitchen.

Elisa, the cook, was making pastry on the long oak table. Her face was redder than her work accounted for.

"Well, Elisa," said Mrs. Trimmer, the housekeeper, "your tongue won't stop of itself, of course not, so I'll stop it."

"Do, ma'am," suggested Elisa with meek incredulity.

"You sha'n't wear them here," said Mrs. Trimmer.

"La, ma'am," said the housemaid Angelina, "she had better wear them in the house than in the street with two hundred boys at her tail."

"That is not my meaning," answered Mrs. Trimmer. "I hired you for a female cook, and the moment you put on — things that don't belong to a woman, our bargain's broke and you go."

"Well, it *is* an indelicate dress," observed Angelina; then turning to John Giles, Elisa's sweetheart, who was eating pork at the dresser, "Don't you think so, Mr. Giles?" inquired she affectedly.

"I-does," said Giles, with his mouth full. Giles was a Briton in the suite of young Seymour.

"Vulgar?" suggested Angelina.

"And no mistake," said Giles: "it's as vulgar as be blowed," added he, clenching the nail with his polished hammer.

"And who asked your opinion?" inquired Elisa, sharply.

"Angelina," replied Giles. Giles was matter-of-fact.

Elisa. I mean to wear it for as vulgar as 'tis.

Giles. Then you had better look for another man (applause).

Elisa. Oh, they are always to be had without *looking out*; so long as there's pickled pork in the kitchen they'll *look in*.

Angelina. Well, I think a woman should dress to gratify the men (with an ceillade at Giles), not to imitate them.

Elisa. The men! so long as we sweep the streets for

them with our skirts, they are all right. You talk of delicacy : is dirt delicacy ?

On this she whipped off a chair by the fire a gown that had met with a misfortune ; it had been out walking on a wet day. Elisa put it viciously under Angelina's nose, who recoiled. An accurate description of it would soil these pages.

"Is that pretty," continued cook, "to carry a hundred-weight of muck wherever you go ?"

"Dirt can't be helped," retorted Trimmer, "indecent can."

"Indecent !" cried Elisa, with a face like scarlet. "Who's a-going to be indecent in this kitchen ?"

"The gals," suggested Angelina, "who wear — who wear" —

"Small-clothes," put in Giles.

A grateful glance repaid him for extricating the pair from a conventional difficulty.

"What, it's indecent because it shows your instep, I suppose ? You go into the drawing-room this evening, and the young ladies shall show you more than ever a bloomer will. Women's delicacy !" said Elisa, putting her hand under the paste and bringing it down on the reverse with a whack. "Gammon ! Fashion is what we care for, not delicacy. If it was the fashion to tie our right foot to our left ear, wouldn't you do it ?"

"No !" said Angelina with but little hesitation.

"Then I would !" cried Elisa, sacrificing herself to her argument. "What did they wear last year," continued this orator, "eh ? answer me that whisking to and fro as they walked and drawing everybody's attention."

In speaking, Elisa was worse than I am in writing, she never punctuated at all.

"So you mean to wear them ?" inquired Mrs. Trimmer, coming back from the argument to the point.

Elisa. Yes, I do.

Observe. At the beginning of the argument she had no such intention.

Mrs. Trimmer. Then I give you a month's warning, here and now, Elisa Staunton.

Elisa. And I won't take it from you, Mrs. Trimmer.

Mrs. Trimmer. Who will you take it from, then ?

Elisa. The mistress or nobody.

Angelina. La, Lisa ! you know she never speaks to a servant.

Elisa. She speaks to Mrs. Trimmer, don't she ?

Mrs. Trimmer. Am I a servant, hussy ? Am I a servant ?

Elisa. Yes, you are ; we are all servants here : some is paid for doing the work, and other some for looking on and interrupting it here and there.

Mrs. Trimmer (gasping). Leave the kitchen, young woman.

Elisa. The kitchen's mine, and the housekeeper's room is yours, old woman.

"Go to the mistress, and tell her I want to come and speak to her," gasped the insulted housekeeper, deprived of motion by her fury.

Angelina took but one step before Elisa caught her, held the roller high above her head, and, saying "If you offer to go there I'll roll ye up into my paste," pushed her down into a chair, where she roared and blubbered.

"O you rude, brutal-behaved woman !" cried Trimmer. "I shall faint."

Helps have an insolence all their own ; they say the most cutting things with a tone of extra sweetness and courtesy, that has the effect of fire quenched with sweet oil, or brandy softened with oil of vitriol.

With such sweet and measured tones Elisa said, half under her breath, "Giles, you go — into the house-

keeper's room — and look behind the door — and you'll find — the biggest brandy-bottle you ever did see — Mrs. Trimmer wants it!"

This dry little speech was hartshorn. Some spring seemed to have been pressed, so erect bounced Mrs. Trimmer.

She bustled up to Elisa, and, with a spite that threatened annihilation, gave her an infinitesimal pat on the back of her head, and retired precipitately with a face in which misgiving already took the place of fury.

Elisa put down the roller quite leisurely, and cleaned her fingers slowly of dough.

"It is lucky for you," said she firmly, "that you are the same age as my mother, or down you'd go on those bricks. Oh! oh! oh! oh! oh!" and down went she on a chair opposite Angelina, and her apron over her head; for these women who are going to tear the house down and stand like mercury on the *débris*, in a bloomer, with a finger pointing to truth and a toe to futurity, are just two shades more faint-hearted at bottom than the others.

So Elisa and Angelina kept up the bawl with great want of spirit, bursting out in turns after the manner of strophe and antistrophe.

Et ululare pares et *despondere* paratæ.

Meantime the man of one idea at a time, Giles, was obeying orders and going after the bottle specified by Elisa, and had his hand on the door of housekeeper's room.

"Giles!" screamed the proprietor. He stood petrified. "There is no such thing in my room," said she, with sudden calmness.

Giles returned to the dresser.

The present scene had lately received an addition that made it perfect, a satirical spectator.

The pantry window which looked into the kitchen was opened by a footman whose head had been previously seen bobbing wildly up and down as he cleaned his plate.

This footman had admired Elisa, but, outweighed by the solid virtues and limbs of Giles, was furtively looking out for a chance of disturbing the balance.

Elisa and Angelina were now sobbing placidly.

Mr. Giles stretched his legs slowly out before him and said very slowly, and with really an appearance of reflection, "Now all this—here—bobbery—comes from a woman—making up—*her* mind—to wear—the—B-ugh a ha ho ho! ugh!"

Elisa had bounced up in a rage, and dabbed the paste right over his mouth, nose, eyes, face, and temples. (He should have spoken quicker.)

It was nearly his death: however, with horrible noises and distortions he got clear of it.

The footman roared with laughter—he thought he never had seen so truly funny a thing done in his life—none of your vulgar jokes—"legitimate humor," thought John (Giles being my rival). However, turning suddenly grave he said,—

"Well, you are drawing it mild, you are—here's the mistress coming to see whose cat's dead." So saying he slammed the window, and his head went bobbing again over his spoons.

At this announcement histrionics commenced. "Mrs. Trimmer, madam," began Elisa demurely, with a total change of manner, "I'm sure, ma'am, you wouldn't take away a poor girl's place that's three thousand miles away from home all for a word, ma'am!"

"You may pack up your box, Elisa, for you won't sleep in this house," was the grim answer.

"O Mrs. Trimmer," remonstrated Elisa tearfully; "if

you have no heart for poor servants, where do you expect to go to?"

"I shall go nowhere," replied the dignitary; "I shall stay here, it's you that shall march." Then hearing a light step approach, she astonished them all by suddenly rising into a wild sonorous recitative, —

"I have my mistress's confidence, and will deserve it."

Miss Courtenay stood on the threshold.

Mrs. Trimmer's game was not to see her. She intoned a little louder.

"No woman shall stay a day in this house" —

"Well, I never!" gasped Angelina, looking towards the door.

"Hold your tongue — no woman shall stay a day in this house who thinks to put on that *immoral, ondelicate, ondecent* — ah! ah! ah!" Trimmer screamed, put her nose out straight in the air — put on her spectacles, and screamed again.

Miss Courtenay stood at the door in a suit of *propria quæ maribus!*

CHAPTER III.

THE world up to that moment had never seen so smart a fella as caused Trimmer's recitative to die in a quaver; ^h_{sh} } e stood in the threshold erect yet lithe, the serpentine lines of youthful female beauty veiled yet not disguised in vest and pantaloons of marvellous cut — neat little collars, dapper shoes and gaiters, delicious purple broadcloth.

"Giles!" groaned Mrs. Trimmer, "you may go for what Elisa said — anybody may do anything now; I

nursed her on these knees," whined the poor woman with the piteous tone that always accompanies this favorite statement.

"Trimmer," said the Courtenay, coldly, "theatrical exhibitions amuse but do not deceive — be yourself."

"Yes, ma'am," answered Trimmer coolly, dropping her histrionics directly and taking up her tact.

"Hearing cries of distress from my household, I came to see if I could be of any service to you — what is the matter?"

"If you please, ma'am," put in Elisa hastily, "it is all along of Mrs. Trimmer being so hard upon the bloomers, ma'am."

A short explanation followed.

Elisa was asked why she had defended this costume. Elisa, having found such a backer, was fluent in defence of the new costume.

The rest looked unutterable things, but could say nothing.

In the middle of one of her long sentences her mistress cut her short, congratulated her demurely on her sense, informed her that she wished one of the servants to assist her in a little scheme for recommending the dress; that she should have hesitated to propose it, but, having found one already so disposed, would use her services.

"On my bed you will find a costume; put it on immediately, and come to me for further instructions." So saying, she vanished with a sly smile.

Elisa watched her departing form with a rueful face. She discovered when too late that she had never for a moment intended to wear the thing, and had only defended it out of contrariness. She moved towards the door like a lamb to sacrifice.

"Ahem!" said Mrs. Trimmer; "you can go into the street dressed like hobbadehoy if you like, Miss Staunton,

but if I might ask a favor, it is that you won't tell the people what house you come out of; because I come of decent people in the neighborhood, that might feel hurt and leave the town owing to such a thing being seen come out of the house where I am. That's all, ma'am. And I am a regular attendant on public and family worship."

This was said very politely.

"Well, ma'am," answered Elisa, beginning as politely, but heating so much per sentence, "I don't know as bloomers are so like what you mention ma'am as your own gown would be ma'am if it was a bit cleaner ma'am. But whenever I meet a new-married couple coming from church I'll step up to the bride and I'll say Mrs. Trimmer requests you would be so good as not put on your night-gown before supper next time, she's turned so devilish modest *all of a sudden*."

So saying, Elisa flounced out in a rage, and, her blood being put up, burned now to go through with it.

CHAPTER IV.

REGINALD SEYMOUR was a handsome, gentlemanly fellow, heir-apparent of the unsuccessful bidder for Courtenay Court.

He had been for six months the declared lover of the heiress, and his sister Harriet, warmly invited by Miss Courtenay, had at length taken advantage of an escort offered by an English family, and was a guest of the *fiancée*.

If Reginald had a fault it was too strong a consciousness of the antiquity and importance of the Seymours, and as that was combined with a determination to hand

down their name as pure as he had received it, it was a very excusable weakness.

He was, however, perhaps rather more formal and stately than suited his youth.

It was in the dusk of the evening that Harriet Seymour, full dressed for the ball and entertainment, came into a sort of antechamber with a bouquet of choice flowers in her hand, and there encountered Caroline, for whom, in fact, she was looking. At sight of her friend Harriet did not at first comprehend; all she realized was that her friend's shoulders were not visible.

"What, not dressed yet, Caroline?" said she. "It is very late."

"I am dressed, dear."

"Why, of course I see you have some clothes on for fun — he! he! — but it is to be a ball, dear."

"My feet will be as unembarrassed as yours, dear," replied Caroline quietly.

Harriet gave her the bouquet, and said, with much meaning, "Reginald sends you these. Of course you did not know he was returned."

"Of course I did," was the reply. "He is to be here."

Harriet. Oh! Reginald loves you, Caroline.

Caroline. So he pretends.

Harriet. He loves you with all the force of an honest heart, and I love you for his sake and your own. Give me the privilege of a sister: let me advise you.

Caroline. With all my heart.

Harriet. Yes; but advice is apt to be ill received.

Caroline. That is because it is given hastily and harshly; but true friends like you and me — oh, fie!

Harriet. Promise, then, not to be angry with me.

Caroline. Certainly; only you must promise not to be angry if I am too silly or self-willed to take it.

Harriet. I should not be angry, love, though I might be grieved on your own account.

Caroline. Well, then, dear.

Harriet. Well, then, dear. Do not receive society in this costume. I will never tell Reginald, and do not you let him know you ever wore it.

Caroline. But how can I help it, when he is going to see me in it?

Harriet. It is for your delicacy, your feminine qualities, he has loved you.

Caroline. Has he? (looking down.) Well, those qualities reside in our souls, not our — habiliments.

Harriet. Not in such habiliments as those. He will be shocked.

Caroline. No; only surprised a little. He, he!

Harriet. He will be grieved, Caroline.

Caroline. I shall console him.

Harriet (with color heightening). He will be indignant.

Caroline (with color rising). I shall laugh at him.

Harriet. He will be disgusted.

Caroline. Ah, then I shall dismiss him.

Harriet. I see I speak to no purpose, Miss Courtenay.

Caroline. To very little, Miss Seymour.

Harriet. I shall say no more, madam.

Caroline. You have said enough, madam.

Harriet. Since you despise my advice, please yourself.

Caroline. I shall take your advice at present.

Harriet. But you will *never* be my brother's wife!

Caroline. Then I shall *always* be mistress in my own house.

Harriet, who was at the door, returned as if to speak, but she was too angry, gave it up, and retired half choking.

A sacred joy filled Caroline's bosom — she had had the last word!

As she was about to pass out of the room who should

enter hastily but Reginald Seymour — her back was towards him.

He called to her, "Can you tell me where I shall find Miss Courtenay, sir?"

Caroline bit her lips; but she turned sharply round and said, "She is in this room, madam."

"Oh!" said Reginald — he added, "O Caroline!" and looked pained.

Caroline blushed; and if heavenly looks and little female artifice could have softened censure they were not wanting.

"What beautiful flowers you have sent me!" said she; "see, I threw away my formal bouquet for your *nose-gay*."

"You do me honor," said the young gentleman uneasily.

"Honor! no! but justice; a single violet from you deserves to be preferred to roses and camellias."

"Dear Caroline! I withdraw; you are not dressed yet, and people will soon arrive."

Caroline saw there was no real way of escape, so with great external calmness she said sweetly, —

"I am dressed, dear Reginald."

"I beg your pardon," said he as not understanding her.

"I forgive you," said the sly thing, taking him up, "there are so many who do not see the beauty of — all this; I have promised to wear it to-night," continued she (not allowing him to get in a word), "and to compare it calmly and candidly with other costumes; you will be so amused, and we shall arrive at a real judgment instead of violent prejudices, which you are above; at least I give you credit; I should not admire you so much as I do if I doubted that."

"Caroline," said the young gentleman, gravely.

"Yes, Reginald."

"Dear Caroline, do you believe I love you?"

"Better than I deserve, I dare say," said Caroline.

"No! as you deserve — I will not own my love inferior even to your merit — do you believe that when we are one my life will be devoted to your happiness?"

"I am sometimes — goose enough — to hope so," murmured Caroline, averting her head.

"Shall you then think ill of me if before marriage I ask a favor, perhaps a sacrifice, of you? I feel I shall not be ungrateful."

"There," thought Caroline. "I am not to wear it — that is plain."

Reginald continued: "If you wear this dress you will give me pain beyond any pleasure you can derive."

"Reginald," said the poor girl, "I wished to wear it — now and then; indeed I *had* set my heart on making a *few* — a very few converts to it: see how pretty it is (no answer); but for your sake, when I take it off to-night, I will give it away, and it shall never, never offend you more."

Reginald kissed her hand.

There was a pause.

"Caroline," said he, stammering, "you do not quite understand me; it is to-day I beg you on no account to wear it."

"Oh! to-day," said she hastily, "I have promised to wear it."

"I entreat you," said he, "consider, if you once show yourself to people from every part of New York in this costume, what more remains to be done?"

"Reginald, be reasonable," said Caroline more coldly: "I stand engaged to some sixty persons to wear this dress to-night — I have made you a concession, and with pleasure, because I make it to you. It is your turn now

—you must think of me as well as of yourself, dear Reginald. I am afraid you must shut your eyes on me for a few hours—that will spoil all my pleasure—or you must fancy, as many a lover has been able to do, that I consecrate a dress, not that a dress has power to lower me.”

“O Caroline! do you value my respect?”

“Yes! and therefore I shall keep my word, and so you will feel sure I shall keep my word to you too if ever I promise something about (blushes and smiles) love—honor—and obey.”

A battle took place in the young man’s mind.

He took several strides backwards and forwards.

At last he burst out, “There are feelings too strong to be conquered by our wishes.

“I cannot bear that my wife should do what three-fourths of her sex think indelicate. We never differed in opinion before, we never shall again—if we do, be assured I will bow to you—I would yield here if I could, but I cannot—I think you can—if you can, have pity on me, and add one more claim to my life-long gratitude.”

The balance trembled—the tears were in Caroline’s eyes—her bosom fluttered—when the demon of Discord inspired her proud nature with this idea:—

“He loves his prejudices better than you,” said Discord, “and this is Tyranny—coaxing Tyranny if you will.”

On this hint spake Caroline.

“I find I have rivals.”

“Rivals!”

“In your prejudices, Reginald. Neither person nor thing shall ever be my rival. Show me at once which you love with the deeper affection, Mr. Seymour’s prejudices or Caroline Courtenay. I shall wear this dress to-

night — only for a few hours : consider ! you will be here and keep me in countenance, or you don't love me."

"No ! Caroline," said Reginald sadly and firmly, "I have spoken : our future life now rests in your hands. I shall not come — I shall arrange so that if you degrade yourself (I cling to the hope you will not) I shall hear of it and leave the country that minute ! Were I to *see* it, by Heaven ! I should leave the world." He said this in a great heat, but recovering himself said, "Forgive me !" kissed her hand, and went despondently away.

Caroline on his departure wished he had gone away in a pet instead of sorrowful — wished he had been her husband to cut the matter short by carrying her in his arms and securing her in his dressing-room till the ball was over : wished she had never seen the bloomer costume — wished she had the courage to hide and cry in an attic till all was over.

On her meditations entered a plump figure with all manner of expressions chasing one another over her countenance — this was Elisa, who courtesied to attract attention, and failing, presumed that her deportment had not corresponded with her costume, so bowed instead, and ducked, and as a last resource gave a pull at the top of her head.

Caroline. Well !

Elisa. If you please ma'am — but if you please ma'am am I to say ma'am or sir now ma'am ?

Caroline. Madam will do for the present.

Elisa. If you please ma'am Kitty the housemaid, that was to wear the short-waisted gown before the company, says she won't put it on for a double dollar.

Caroline. Promise her four dollars then.

Elisa. Yes M.

Caroline. The girl's mother would have been as loath to wear a long waist.

Elisa. Yes M.

Caroline. And to-morrow morning tell Trimmer to discharge her.

Elisa. Yes, M! Oho! (thought Elisa), then now is the time to trim that old fagot Trimmer.

"If you please ma'am I have the greatest respect for Mrs. Trimmer, because she has been here longer than I have, and is a good servant ma'am there's no denying it; but if you please M there's no putting Mrs. Trimmer out of her turnpike road, as the saying is. She says if I don't make the jellies and blamonge she'll make you turn me off ma'am; now how can I when I'm got to learn off all those words you gave me if you please ma'am am I take your orders or Mrs. Trimmer's M?"

Caroline. Now I must ask you a question — who are you?

Elisa. La ma'am! I am Elisa mum! cook mum! I make guava jelly that you like so ma'am!

Caroline. Very well! then Elisa cook, for six hours you are my lieutenant here, and queen in the kitchen: give your orders, and discharge Trimmer and every man or woman in the house that disobeys you, and I'll confirm all you do.

Elisa. Yes M (with flashing eyes).

Caroline. And if you abuse your authority you shall be the first victim.

Elisa. Yes M (crestfallen).

"There," said Elisa to herself as she absconded with a modest reverence, "I've been and given you a dig in your old ribs with my rolling-pin, Mrs. Trimmer."

"Until to-day," thought her mistress, "a look from me was law, and now every creature high and low thwarts and opposes me, ever since I put these vile things on."

Now some would have carried the reasoning out thus: *Ergo*, take these vile things off!

But this sweet creature never dreamed of that path of inference.

"Of this there can be but one consequence," said she, "I shall do it ten times the more."

She then burst out crying, which was an unfair advantage the bloomer took over poor Reginald: for after a shower of tears the ladies acquire additional force.

Rat a tat, tat a tat, tat! tat! tat! tat!

The guests arrived. We shall only particularize one. Mr. Fitzpatrick, an Irish gentleman, who had retained the delightful qualities of his nation and rubbed off its ignorance, and down its prejudices.

Handsome, gay, and though not varnished, polished, he was as charming a companion as either a man or woman could desire.

He was as fond of men as Englishmen are of women, and as fond of the ladies as an Englishman is of adulterated wine.

Fitzpatrick's flattery was agreeable to the ladies; it was so very sincere — he really saw *en beau* both them and all their ways.

At sight of Miss Courtenay in a bloomer he was ravished.

"O Miss Caroline! but that's a beautiful costume ye've invented: the few of us that's left standing will fall to-night: ye've no conscience at all."

"I did not invent the hideous thing; it is bloomer."

"Bloomer? ye're joking. What! is it this they've been running down? Oh! the haythen barbarians! ye were a rainbow at the last ball; but now ye're a sunbeam — ye'll not be for dancing the first dance with an uncouth Celt."

"You will not be for waiting till the seventh, Mr. Fitzpatrick!"

"Is it only six ye're engaged? Oh, but I'm in luck to-night."

Mr. Fitzpatrick had been for some time puzzled which he loved most, Harriet Seymour or Caroline Courtenay: but last week he had decided in favor of the latter; without prejudice to the former.

The dancing was kept up with some spirit for two hours; and then Caroline's associates were observed to steal out and to make for various apartments in her very large house on the doors of which their respective names were written in chalk.

Results, not processes, are for the public eye.

Suffice it to say at present in excuse of Caroline's obstinacy that she had been at no small trouble and expense to carry out her little idea. She had also read, drawn, composed, and written: others that saw the work had given her credit for some talent, great talent of course they said; and she was mortified to think her lover would not give her this opportunity of showing him her wit, on which she secretly valued herself more than on her beauty.

A polka concluded. A tide of servants poured in. A semicircle of seats sprung up. A pulpit rose like an exhalation, and almost before her guests could seat themselves, Caroline was a lecturer wearing over her bloomer a B. C. L. gown from Oxford, and the four-cornered cap of that university on her head.

L'effrontée! of whom think you she had borrowed this two days before? — of Reginald!

The optimist Fitzpatrick was enchanted. "She was more beautiful in this than even in a bloomer!" And indeed it became her: the gravity of the dress made a keen contrast with her archness. She was like a vivid flower springing unexpectedly from some time-stained wall — dancing, vanity, wit, pique at Reginald, and the

flattery of others made her cheek flush, her eyes flash.

"Ahem!" said she in the dry-as-dust tone of a lecturer, "ladies and gentlemen, as you will have to bear with many costumes this evening, permit me to begin with this.

"I wear it, ladies and gentlemen, because it is supposed to confer a right to be tedious — a-hem !

"I am here to attack two principal errors.

"One is that such fashions as embarrass the limbs are of a nature to last upon earth.

"The other is that pantaloons are essentially masculine and sweeping robes feminine.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we women can only predict the future by examining the past — moles and rabbits may have some other way, though I think not.

"Elisa !

"Call back past facts with lessons fraught,
To teach us — if we can be taught."

Elisa opened the door.

Miss Spilman, the musical associate, splashed a magnificent chord on the piano, and in sailed Queen Elizabeth. I mean a lady in the exact costume in which that queen went into the city to return thanks for the destruction of the Spanish Armada.

Set a stomacher three feet long between two monstrous jelly bags upon a bloated bell, and there you have this queen and her successor in New York.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the lecturer, "common-sense fell flatter than Spain the day royalty appeared thus.

"Could a duck make a doll, this would be the result.

"Yet this costume, as much admired once as ours is now, is only the principle of our own carried a step

farther: at the head of our principle is the sack in which rustics jump at a fair; next comes Queen Bess, and then come we.

“With us motion is *embarrassed*.

“With Queen Bess motion is *impeded*.

“With the sack motion is *obstructed*.

“In rational and therefore permanent costumes motion is *free*. *Vide* Time and the World!”

A Chord.

With a multiplicity of affectation in came a courtier the point of whose shoes touched his knees, and he seemed proud of them.

No remark was made: this thing spoke for itself.

Next a noise was heard, and with infinite difficulty a lady was squeezed in who wore the genuine hoop.

Two short-waisted ladies came in.

Everybody laughed at the sight of them.

Straight one of them burst out a-crying. This was Kitty, who was instantly attempted to be consoled (as the papers phrase it) by Mr. Fitzpatrick: he told her nothing could disguise her comeliness, and really thought so at the moment.

This dress set people talking: those who had worn it confessed to the younger ones that they had thought it beautiful, and had anticipated the destruction of nature as soon as the demise of this phase of the unnatural.

Then followed gigot sleeves.

Two chords were struck on the piano, and Miss Courtenay resumed her lecture thus:—

RECITATIVE.

“All these good people when they were here thought they must be here forever,
Or as long as men and women, and Primrose Hill and the Mississippi River;

But they proved more like the flower than the hill that bears
its name —

And instead of the great Mississippi, they were bubbles float-
ing down that same."

SONG.

"Such fashions are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, the bloom is fled;
Or like a snowflake on a river,
A moment seen, then gone forever."

"We have shown you the costumes that could not stand the
shock of time:

You shall now see what sort of costumes have stood the brunt
of centuries — compare the bloomers

With each in turn — and you will be on the path of truth."

Armenian, Polish, and Sicilian peasants were then
introduced, whose limbs were free enough, goodness
knows; they ranged themselves in a line opposite their
stiff competitors — and a bloomer took up the recitative.

"All these unlike the bloomer confine the limbs and make the
ribs to crack,

All those like bloomers free the mind, the body, and the back.
So hail to great Amelia who takes a sex out of a sack."

SONG.

"For grace is motion unconfined,
Like rippling sea or sweeping wind;
Free as the waves of yellow corn
That bows to greet the breezy morn."

The applause had but just subsided, when a clear,
rich, quaint voice arose, and to the equal surprise of the
lecturer and company, trilled forth the following stanza
to some fossil tune. Chevy Chace — we really believe.

"The ass with four legs has the wit
None of those four to tether —
But there's a greater ass with two
That ties those two together."

While the others sat aghast.

"Now that was like honey dropping from the comb," exclaimed Fitzpatrick.

"Now you know, Mr. Fitzpatrick, it was like vinegar distilling from a cruet," replied Miss Courtenay.

"There *was* an agreeable acidulation compared with yours, Miss Courtenay, but in itself delicious," retorted the optimist.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the modern Portia, "the first head of my lecture is before you. I am now to prove that pantaloons are not necessarily masculine nor long skirts feminine."

On this entered two Persian women in gorgeous costume and very spacious trousers.

They salaamed to Caroline and the bloomers, but seemed staggered by the other figures. Whilst they whispered and eyed the company, Caroline lectured:—

"Ladies, this costume is worn by half the well-dressed women in the world: and we must not flatter ourselves we are more feminine than Mussul women—on the contrary, these pantalooned females practise a reserve, compared with which the modesty of Europe is masculine impudence."

A Lady. Make them speak. I don't think they are women at all.

Caroline. They are women, I assure you, Miss White, for one has just borrowed a pin of me.

Miss White. Then why don't they talk?

Caroline. He! he! the inference is just. They are going to speak—unless they have forgotten all I—

Zuleima. They *have* feet, and even legs. O Holy Prophet, here are women who muffle their feet, and reveal their necks to the gaze of man.

Fatima. What dirt has this people eaten? Can this be the great Frank nation, whose ships subdue every

sea, and whose wisdom and probity are such that the evil spirit himself cannot get the better of them in making bargains: are these sea kings sprung from fools, who hide their feet which were made for show and motion, and reveal their faces and necks, which is unlawful?

Zuleima. Daughter of the Commander of the Faithful—your slave has an idea.

Fatima (with some surprise). Bismillah! In the name of the Prophet let me hear it.

Zuleima. Three revolutions of the moon are completed since we sailed in ships from Istamboul: in the mean time Sheitan has doubtless obtained permission to derange this people's intellects, that so they may be converted to the true faith. Thus, their brains being confounded, they muffle their feet, and reveal their necks without shame to the gaze of man: your slave has spoken.

Fatima. It is well spoken: it is also a nation which sups on opium—and drinks hot wine, as a camel sucks water in the desert—we will therefore sit on ottomans and laugh.

Zuleima. Be cheshm! On my eyes be it!

Fatima. Seven days.

Zuleima. And seven nights.

Fatima. At these children.

Zuleima. Of Burnt Fathers.

Fatima and Zuleima. We will laugh. Seven days

And seven nights

At these children

Of Burnt Fathers.

They then sat like little tailors on two ottomans opposite each other, and, nodding like mandarins, laughed mechanically as became people who were going to make seven nights of it.

Caroline. Adsis, O Cato. Call him, Elisa.

Elisa. If you please um would you say them words again?

Caroline. Adsis, O Cato.

Elisa. Assist us, old King Cole!

Cato swept in with a magnificent toga —

“*Adsum*,” said he, “*quis me vocat?*”

Caroline. Be pleased, sir, to tell us which are the most masculine and which the most feminine of these good souls.

Cato folded his arms and took three antique strides. “These cackling creatures,” said he, “are Persian women — this (Elisa) is a native, I believe, of some barbarous country not yet under the dominion of Rome.”

Elisa. Nor don’t mean to.

Cato. These with black plaster stuck to them are of the genus *Simii* or apes. The rest with togæ, but no beards, are, I suppose, of the *Epicene* class — dismiss me.

A Chord.

Cato. Abeo — (chord.) Excedo — (chord.) Evado — (chord.) Erumpo — (four strides, one for each verb, took him out with a sharp and pleasing effect.)

This ended the lecture, and a dance of all ages and climes was proposed.

“I can’t hop as you do nowadays,” remonstrated the hoop; “I was taught to dance.”

“Grace was in all my steps,” said the courtier.

Said Caroline, “Dance in your own way, dress in your own way, and let your neighbors have their way — that is the best way!”

A dance was then played with no very marked accent; and mighty pleasant it was to see couples polking, couples gavotting with all the superstition of antiquated grace, and waltzes and jigs and tarantula. The sanctified solem-

nity with which polite people frisk was for this once exchanged for sly gravity and little bursts of merriment. Boom! went a gun at sea.

The great steamer was starting for England.

It was a brilliant moonlight.

There was a general move to the supper-room, which had four windows looking seaward.

One old lady lingered a moment to convey to her host her opinion of the lecture.

"You are a very clever young lady. Your lecture was very ingenious."

"I am fortunate in your friendly consideration of it, madam," said Caroline.

"The women in trousers were funny."

"If it gave my friends a smile, Miss Ruth"—

"It will make bloomers, I believe—it was as good as a play, Miss Courtenay; and I shall never enter your house again, madam." With this conclusion Miss Ruth became a vertical rod and marched off.

The next moment a servant brought Caroline a letter. She opened it. A smile with which she was listening to Fitzpatrick's admiration became a stone smile as her eyes fixed themselves on the paper. She gave a cry like one wounded, and, stretching out her hands with a tender helplessness that at once gave the lie to her dress, she sank insensible into Mr. Fitzpatrick's arms.

The steamboat was taking Reginald past her window to England.

CHAPTER V.

SEVERAL months after this event a young gentleman was seated in a study, book in hand, but by no effort could he give his mind to the book. He sighed, turned the leaves, and gave it up in despair. This was Reginald Seymour, whose offended dignity and delicacy had borne him stiffly up for five months, but could support him no longer.

He had now had leisure to remember the many high qualities of her whose one fault he had thought unpardonable. He had flung away a jewel for a single flaw — jewels are rare — he began to think he had been a fool, and to know he was wretched.

What was to be done? He had been silent so long that now he was ashamed to write, and when he had, with a great struggle, determined to make the first overtures, a letter from his sister had given him a mysterious hint that it would now be too late to attempt an accommodation.

Reginald was not one of those who babble their griefs, and cure themselves in ten days by tormenting all their friends.

He was silent, distracted, reserved.

His own family, who guessed the cause of his low spirits, respected him too much to approach the subject, or to let strangers into the secret.

They left him in peaceable enjoyment of his misery.

He thanked them in his heart, and availed himself to the full of their kind permission.

He sat in a room whose windows looked on Courtenay

Court, and in that room, in the company of the immortal dead — *s'ennuyait*.

One of these painful reveries was interrupted by a visitor, an old gentleman in black gaiters and a white head, — the Rev. James Tremaine, perpetual curate of Conyton, an old and true friend of both houses, and Reginald's tutor for many years. Mr. Tremaine had not seen his depression without interest. He was acquainted with the cause. The Seymours had few secrets from him.

Certain features in every story vary according to the side we hear it from, and Mr. Tremaine secretly congratulated Reginald on his escape from a strong-minded woman. He called, not to keep his pupil's mind fixed on the subject, but, on the contrary, to divert him from it.

After noticing with regret the young man's depression, he asked permission to be his physician.

"I see," said he, "what it is: you want some fixed intellectual pursuit. Will you allow me to recommend you one?"

"As many as you like, dear sir," said Reginald, "for I am wearied of my life; I have nothing to do," added he, thinking to throw dust in his mentor's eyes.

Mr. Tremaine took his cue, and then and there proposed to his late pupil's attention an interesting pursuit, suited to that part of the country — geology. "It is a science," said he, "which lifts you out of this ignorant present, and transports you into various stages of this earth's existence. You learn on its threshold what a mushroom in this world's great story is the author of the pyramids.

"You find that the earth was red-hot for millions of years, and spouted liquid stone like a whale. In that stone look for no sign of vegetation, and still fewer of life. Then for millions of years the heat of its upper crust has been cooling, and water depositing rubbish which has coagulated into stone; and in this stratified stone you

shall find things that lived or grew very late in the world's history, — in fact, within a few million years of mammoths, who precede man by a few thousand years only, — at least, I think so, since the flesh of mammoths has been found in ice in our own day, and was eaten by our contemporaries, the wolves."

The old gentleman then hinted, with a twinkle in the eye, that this science has also its prose; that, by breaking stones with iron in them, men have repaired their own shattered fortunes; that coal, silver, iron, and even gold are as common as dirt, though not quite so easy to come at, and that geology, really mastered, would teach its proficient the signs of their presence; brief, how much better to circulate over the face of Devonshire with hammer and book, than be a prey to weariness without the excuse of work!

Mr. Tremaine had not observed what we have: that snobs in fustian jackets without a single polysyllable to their tongues find all the gold and all the coal that is found; and science finds the crustaceonidunculæ.

Botany Mr. Tremaine recommended only as a relaxation of the more useful study; at the same time he hinted it was amusing to be able to classify plants, not by their properties, but their petals, and to call everything by its long name that belongs to twenty other things as well, instead of knowing each by its own name as the vulgar unscientific do.

"Oh, *le plaisant projet!*" exclaims my reader, "he knows the boy is in love, and prescribes geology and botany."

Well, is not one folly best cured by another? But is this sort of thing folly? especially in a youth born to fortune.

Experience is our only safe guide in all things — and experience proves that geology and botany are roads to happiness.

Other things are constantly tried in vain — these seldom fail.

Ambition is raging agitation followed by bitter disappointment.

Wit, an unruly engine, recoils on him that plays it.

Politics, love, theology, art, are full of thorns; but when you see a man perched like a crow on a rock chipping it, you see a happy dog. You who are on the lookout for beauty find irregular features or lack-lustre dolls — you who love wit are brained with puns or ill-nature, the two forms of wit that exist out of books. But the hammerist can jump out of his gig at any turn of the road and find that which his soul desires — the meanest stone a boy throws at a robin is millions of years older than the Farnese Hercules, and has a history as well as a sermon.

Stones are curious things. If a man is paid for breaking them, he is wretched; but if he can bring his mind to do it gratis, he is at the summit of content! With these men life is a felicitous dream — they are not subject to low spirits like other men; they smile away their human day; and when they are to die they don't seem to mind so very much. Can they take anything easy by giving it one of their hard names — is the grave to them a cretaceous, or argillaceous, or ferruginous bed; I beg their pardon — stratum?

No! It is because their hobbies have been innocent: and other men's hobbies are so apt to be vicious.

These have broken stones while egotists have been breaking human hearts.

Mr. Tremaine was enlarging on such topics with more eloquence and method than I, and his patient became animated with a sudden expression of surprise, hope, joy.

He looked out of the window.

The old gentleman looked too. "Ah," cried he, "I see! Yes, Reginald! that is better than science and beyond the power of art."

"Yes!" said Reginald.

"That glorious breadth of golden sunlight that streams across that foliage," continued the savant.

"Sunshine and leaves?" cried Reginald, "it is something of more importance I am looking at."

"More importance than sunshine?" said the old gentleman faintly.

"YES! SEE! LOOK! — THE SMOKE FROM THOSE CHIMNEYS!"

Mr. Tremaine looked; and Courtenay Court was smoking from a dozen chimneys at once. He was taken off his guard.

"She must be come home," said he, "or coming! (aside) plague take her!"

Reginald seized him by the hand.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. TREMAINE was right. Caroline was expected at Courtenay Court. The next day she arrived, bringing Miss Seymour, who went to her father's house.

They had been escorted across the water by Mr. Fitzpatrick; but he remained in town. Before they left New York this gentleman had declared himself Caroline's professed admirer. Caroline asked him with some archness which he loved best, her or Miss Seymour. The question staggered him for a moment, so he said, "Can you ask?" Cross-examined, however, he was brought to this, that he liked Caroline a shade better than Harriet.

During the voyage home Mr. Fitzpatrick lost a portion of his gayety, and was seen at times to be grave and perplexed; novel phenomenon.

Harriet Seymour and Caroline had got over their tiff, and indeed Harriet for months past had sided rather with her friend than her brother. "Caroline was wrong," said she, "but Reginald was more wrong. He ought to have forgiven a woman a caprice." Harriet therefore spent the evening of her arrival at home; but early next morning she rode over to Courtenay Court to bear her friend company. She was the more eager to lend her countenance because others were so hard upon her.

For the evening of her arrival Caroline was discussed at Seymour Hall. The old people, including Mr. Tremaine, spoke of her with horror; tomboy, vixen, and even strong-minded woman, from which Heaven defend us males! They congratulated themselves and Reginald on his escape from her. Reginald maintained a dogged silence. But when Harriet stoutly defended his late sweetheart, and declared that her faults were only on the surface, he cast a look of gratitude at her, that she caught and comprehended. Her defence was not quite lost on others. Mr. Tremaine asked her quietly, "Has Miss Courtenay really anything good about her?"

"Judge for yourself," replied Harriet, with a toss of the head. "Call on her. She is your parishioner."

"Humph! I don't like strong-minded women. They say she can swim into the bargain; but I certainly shall call on her, and judge with my own eyes. Her father was a worthy man."

To return, Caroline and Harriet were walking in the grounds of Courtenay Court, at some distance from the house. Harriet was lionizing the mistress, showing her her beauties, the famous old yew-tree, the narrow but deep water that meandered through her grounds, and

each admired view and nook. It was charming, and both ladies did loud admiration; and did not care a button for it all.

Harriet. Is Mr. Fitzpatrick coming to-day?

Caroline. I don't know: what a curious bridge! it looks like a long gate. Shall we cross it?

Harriet. Not for the world: the water is ever so deep.

Caroline. I did not mean to cross the water, only the bridge.

Harriet. But see how crazy it is! the wood is so old; nobody has lived here ever so long, and then it is so hard to keep on it too.

Caroline looked wistfully at the primitive bridge. "If I had my bloomer on, I would soon be over it," said she, "but this appendage would catch my feet and draggle in the water at every step."

Harriet implored her friend never to mention that word again.

"Bloomer! it is the cause we are all unhappy."

"What, are *you* unhappy? What about? Oh, he will be here to-day, dear, ten to one."

"Who, pray?"

"Mr. Fitzpatrick."

"Mr. Fitzpatrick is your lover, not mine," said Harriet, coloring all over.

"So he is. I forgot. Oh, look at the tail of your gown — three straws, two sticks, and such a long brier."

Harriet. Put your foot on it, dear. These lawyers are the plague of this county.

Caroline. Lawyers?

Harriet. I forget, you don't know our country terms; we call these long briers lawyers; because when once they got hold of you —

Caroline. I understand — all to be avoided by a little bloomer.

Harriet. Now, Caroline, don't. — I wish the woman had never been born. Let us go into the shade.

An observer of the sex might have noticed the same languor, and the same restlessness, in both these ladies, though one was Yankee and one English.

At last they fell into silence. It was Caroline who broke the silence. "Nobody comes to welcome me or even sends. How hospitable these British are! If I had quarrelled with any one in their own country, and then they came to mine, I should be generous, I should make that an excuse for holding out the hand, and being friends any way, if I could be nothing more. But the people here are not of my mind. All the worse for them. Much I care. I shall go and see where they have buried my father. I don't believe he would have died if he had not come here; and then I shall go back home across the water, to my country, where men know how to quarrel, ay, and fight, too, and then drop it when it is done with." Thus spake the Yankee girl. The English girl colored up, but she did not answer back — except by turning brimming eyes and a look of gentle reproach on her.

On this, partly because she was unhappy, partly because this mild look pricked her great though wayward heart, the Yankee girl began to cry bitterly.

On this the English girl flung her arms round the Yankee girl's neck, and cried with her.

"Dearest, he loves you still."

"Still! he never loved me, Harriet. Oh, no — he never loved me — oh, oh!"

"You forget; I have been home. I have seen him. He is pale — he is sad."

"That is a c—c—comfort. I wish he was at d—d—death's door."

"He is far more unhappy than you are."

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“Are you Miss Courtenay?”



"I am so glad — I don't believe it."

"You may believe it — I have seen it."

At this moment a servant was seen approaching; he came up, touched his hat to Caroline with a world of obsequiousness, and informed her the parson had called to see her and was in the drawing-room.

"The parson?"

"The Rev. Mr. Tremaine, miss."

"A great friend of our family," explained Harriet.

"Ah, tell me all about him as we go along."

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Tremaine. Will she receive me in a bloomer?

Harriet. I don't know — I hope not. She was decent a minute ago.

Tremaine. Perhaps she has gone to put one on.

Harriet gave a start, and had a misgiving, Caroline being a devil. "Heaven forbid!" she cried. "I will go and see."

The next minute a young lady of singular beauty and grace glided into the room. She was dressed richly but very plainly. Mr. Tremaine looked at her with surprise. "Are you Miss Courtenay?" She smiled sweetly and told him she was Miss Courtenay. She added that Mr. Tremaine was no stranger to her; she had often heard of him and his virtues in happier days. After that she thanked him for being the first to welcome her home.

"We shall all feel flattered at your calling it home, Miss Courtenay; we must try and keep you here after that."

In about ten minutes the intelligent young beauty had not only dissolved Mr. Tremaine's prejudices against

her, but had substituted a strong prejudice in her favor.

"This quiet, ladylike, dignified, gentle, amiable, beautiful young woman a tomboy?" said he to himself. "I don't believe it—it surpasses belief—it is false!"

There was a pause.

"Miss Courtenay," began the old gentleman, "your late father, during the short time he was among us, gained the respect of the whole county. I cannot help thinking you will be his successor in our esteem as well as in Courtenay Court."

Miss Courtenay bowed with quiet dignity.

"The worst of it is, we are an old-fashioned people here in Devonshire. We are strait-laced—ahem—in short—shall I be presuming too far on our short acquaintance if (pray give me credit for friendly motives) I ask permission to put you a question? But no, when I look at you—it is impossible."

"What is impossible, sir?"

"That you can ever have"—and the old gentleman flushed a bit; "by the by, they say you can swim, Miss Courtenay."

"A little, not worth boasting of," replied Caroline, modestly. "I think I could make shift to swim across this room, if the sea was in it."

"Oh, no farther than that? well, there is not much harm in that. But they do say, you have done us the honor, ahem—to wear male habiliments—is that true?"

"Indeed, Mr. Tremaine, I have; let—me—see, I think it was at a fancy ball,—in my own house—at New York." The words were said with assumed carelessness and candor.

"What, on no other occasion?"

"On no other public occasion — why?" inquired Caroline *so* innocently.

"Then, really, I think too much has been made of it. But you are said to advocate the bloomer costume."

"I have often advocated it, in words, sir; but wearing it is a different matter, you know."

"Very different, very different indeed," said Tremaine, hastily.

"I could not help advocating it; its adversaries argued so weakly against it. Shall I repeat their arguments and my own?"

"If you please."

Caroline, with the calm indifference of a judge, stated the usual arguments pro and con, and did not fail to dwell upon the trousers of Eastern women. Mr. Tremaine took her up.

"There is a flaw in your reasoning, I think," said he; "those Eastern women distinguish themselves from men by a thick veil — they all wear a thick veil. It appears to me that the true argument against bloomer has never been laid before you. It is this: in every civilized nation, the entire sexes are distinguished by some marked costume. But bloomer proposes that one-third of the women should be at variance with the other two-thirds."

"Oh, no, sir! she is for dressing them all in bloomers."

"No, excuse me; how would old women and fat women look in a bloomer? How would young matrons look at that period when a woman is most a woman? No; the dress for women must clearly be some dress that becomes all women, at all times and occasions of life. There are plenty of boys of sixteen or seventeen, who could be dressed as women, and eclipse all the women in a ball-room; but it would be indelicate and unmanly. You, with your youthful, symmetrical figure,

could eclipse most young men in their own habiliments: but it would be indelicate and unwomanly. Forgive me; I distress you."

"No, sir! but you convince me; and that is new to me. I admit this argument at once; and so I would have done six months ago; but no one had the intelligence to put the matter to me so," said the sly thing.

"You seem to be a very reasonable young lady."

"It is the only merit I have."

"Permit me to contradict you again. Well, then, since the bloomer difficulty is despatched, let me have the honor and the happiness of reconciling an honorable young man with the most charming young lady I have met with this many a day."

The charming young lady froze directly.

"I will not affect to misunderstand you, sir; but the difference between Mr. Seymour and myself lies deeper than this paltry dress: lies too deep for you to cure: the bloomer was a mere pretext. Mr. Seymour did not love me."

"Excuse me; I know better."

"When we love people, we forgive their faults: we forgive their virtues even."

Mr. Tremaine looked at her with some surprise. The Devonshire ladies had not tongues so pointed as the fair Yankee's.

"He did love you — he does love you."

"No, Mr. Tremaine — no. Was that a fault for any one who really loved me, to quarrel out and out with a spoiled child for?" Here two tears, one real, the other crocodile, ran down her lovely cheeks, and did the poor old gentleman's business entirely. "He deserves to be hanged," cried he jumping up, in great haste, "young fool! But he does love you tenderly, sincerely. He has never been happy since. He never will be

happy till you are reconciled to him. He is waiting in great anxiety for my return. I shall tell him to ride over here, and just — go — down — on — his — knees to you, and ask your forgiveness. Then will you forgive him?"

"I will try, sir," said Caroline, doubtfully; "but he owes much to his advocate, and so you may tell him."

"I shall be vain enough to tell him so, you may depend;" and away went Mr. Tremaine, Caroline's devoted champion through thick and thin from this hour. As he rode away, zeal and benevolence shining through him, Caroline said dryly to herself, "I am your friend for life, old boy."

Harriet came in and heard the news; she was delighted.

"Reginald will be here as fast as his horse's feet can carry him. Mr. Tremaine is all powerful in our house."

"So I concluded from what you told me," said Caroline, demurely; "and I — hem — will you excuse me for half an hour?"

"Yes, dear; you will find me on the lawn."

Full three-quarters of an hour had elapsed, and Harriet was beginning to wonder what had become of her friend, when a musical laugh rang behind her. She turned round, and beheld a sight that made her scream with terror and dismay — there stood Caroline in *PROPRIA QUÆ MARIBUS* as bold as brass.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE face of uneasy defiance Caroline got up when Harriet faced her was truly delicious.

"It is all over," gasped Harriet, "you are incurable."

"He loves me," explained Caroline; "when I felt like giving in, I didn't think he loved me."

Harriet made no reply; she marched off stiffly. The bloomer followed and tried to appease her by reminding her how hard it was to give in as long as a chance of victory remained — "Hard — it is impossible — it hurts!"

No answer.

"It was all that dear old man's fault for letting out that he loves me still, and he is unhappy; so then he is in my power, and I can't give in now — and I won't. No. Let us see whether it is me or my clothes he loves — ah, ah! Oh, my dear girl, here he comes; let me get behind you. Oh, dear, I wish I hadn't."

Sure enough, Reginald was coming down to the other side of the stream.

Caroline got half behind Harriet.

Reginald came along the bridge to join them.

"I wish it would break down," whined Caroline. "Then I'd run home, and I know what I would do."

The words were out of her mouth and no more, when some portion of the rotten wood gave way, and splash goes Reginald into the water.

Harriet screamed. Caroline laughed.

Her laughter was soon turned to dismay. Reginald

sank ; he came up and struggled towards the wood-work, but in vain : the current had carried him a yard or two from it, and even that small space he could not recover. He was too proud to cry for help, but he was drowning.

"He can't swim," cried Caroline, and she darted into the stream like a water spaniel. In two strokes she was beside him, and seized him by the hair. One stroke took her to the remnant of the bridge. "Lay hold of that, Reginald," she cried. He obeyed, and, while she swam ashore, he worked along the wooden bridge to the bank.

The moment she saw him safe, she began to laugh again ; and then what does my lady do but set off running home full pelt before he could say a word to her ! He followed her crying, "Caroline, Caroline !" It was no use : she was in her bloomer and had the start, and ran like a doe.

"O Reginald ! go home and change your clothes," cried the tender Harriet.

"What, go home before I have thanked my guardian angel, my beloved ? "

"Your guardian angel must change her clothes, and you must change yours ; you will catch your death."

"At least tell her she shall wear what she pleases ; tell her" —

"I will tell her nothing ; come and tell it her yourself, frightening me so. Her bloomer is spoiled forever now, that is one comfort."

Reginald ran to the stables, got his horse, galloped home, dressed himself, and galloped back, and came into Caroline's drawing-room open mouthed. "Wear what you like, dear Caroline ; why, you are in a gown ! No matter — forgive me — oh, forgive me — I have been ungrateful once — I never will again. My beloved, what, did I not owe you enough before, that you must

save my life? O Caroline, one word; can the devotion of a life restore me the treasure I once had, and trifled with—for what?” then he fell to kissing her hands and her gown. Then she, seeing him quite overcome, was all woman.

“Reginald,” she murmured, and sank upon his neck, all her strength of mind dissolving in tears and love.

“What did you say about bloomer, Reginald dear?”

“I said you should wear what you liked, sweet one.”

“Ah, then we are never to agree, for I mean to wear whatever you like.”

This was “the way to take her,” one of that sort; they are to be made slaves of just as easily as the hen-hearted ones. But ye mustn’t show ’em the chain!

Afternoon came Fitz.

Caroline. Mr. Fitzpatrick, will you come here?

Fitzpatrick. I will. An Irishman always consents, but never says “yes.”

Caroline (with a twinkle in her eye). Will you do me a favor?

Fitzpatrick. I will.

Caroline. Do you see that lady sitting there? (Harriet.)

Fitzpatrick (coloring). I do.

Caroline. Go and marry her.

And she gave him a push that seemed less than a feather, but somehow it propelled Fitz all across the room, and sent him down on his knees before Harriet. N.B. There were only these three in the room.

Mr. Tremaine married two couples in one day—Reginald and Caroline; Fitzpatrick and Harriet. I ought to explain to those who have not seen it, that during the voyage Fitz had discovered it was Harriet he loved a *souçon* the best of the two.

At the wedding breakfast, arrayed in white and adorned with wreaths, both the Yankee and the English beauty were intolerably lovely.

No one seemed more conscious of this double fact than Fitz. Caroline observed his looks, and took occasion to say to him confidentially, "Wouldn't you like to have married both ladies? Now, come, tell the truth."

"Indeed and I would," replied the candid Celt, unconscious of any satire in the question.

America takes two hundred thousand English every year. We have got this one Yankee in return, and we mean to keep her.

A year after they had been married she wanted to give her bloomer to one of the stable-boys. "What, the dress you saved my life in?" cried Reginald. "I would not part with it to a prince, for the price of a king's ransom."

Lads and lasses, this trifle is what I have called it, "*a jeu d'esprit*," written for your amusement, and not intended to improve you, instruct you, or elevate your morals.

A thing not to be approved in general, but excused once in a way, methinks.

— Neque semper arcum
Tendit Apollo.

III

ART: A DRAMATIC TALE

EARLY in the last century two young women were talking together in a large apartment, richly furnished. One of these was Susan, cousin and dependent of Mrs. Anne Oldfield; the other was a flower-girl, whom that lady had fascinated by her scenic talent. The poor girl was but one of many persons over whom Mrs. Oldfield had cast a spell, and yet this actress had not reached the zenith of her reputation.

The town, which does not always know its own mind about actors, applauded one or two of her rivals more than her, and fancied it admired them more.

Oldfield was the woman (there is always one) who used the tones of nature upon the stage in that day. She ranted at times like her neighbors, but she never ranted out of tune, like them. Her declamation was nature, *alias* art, thundering; theirs was artifice raving. Her treatment of words was as follows: she mastered them in the tone of household speech; she then gradually built up these simple tones into a gorgeous edifice of music and meaning; but though dilated, heightened, and embellished, they never lost their original truth. Her rivals started from a lie, so the higher they soared the further they left truth behind them. They do the same thing now pretty universally.

The public is a very good judge, and no judge at all, of such matters. I will explain.

Let the stage voice and the dramatic voice, the artificial and the artistic, the bastard and the legitimate, the false and the true, be kept apart upon separate stages, and there is no security that the public will not, as far as hands go, applaud the monotone or lie more than the melodious truth. But set the lie and the truth side by side upon fair terms, and the public becomes what the critics of this particular art have never been, — a critic; and stage bubbles, that have bubbled for years, are liable to burst in a single night.

Mrs. Oldfield was wise enough, even in her generation, to know that the public's powers of comparison require that the things to be compared shall be placed cheek by jowl before it; and this is why she had for some time manoeuvred to play, foot to foot, against Mrs. Bracegirdle, the champion of the stage.

Bracegirdle, strong in position, tradition, face, figure, and many qualities of an actor, was by no means sorry of an opportunity to quench a rising rival; and thus the two ladies were to act together in the "Rival Queens," within a few days of our story.

Roxana MRS. BRACEGIRDLE.
Statira MRS. OLDFIELD.

The town, whose heart at that epoch was in the theatre, awaited this singular struggle in a state of burning excitement we can no longer realize.

Susan Oldfield, first cousin of the tragedian, was a dramatic aspirant. Anne's success having travelled into the provinces, her aunt, Susan's mother, said to Susan, who was making a cream cheese, "You go an' act too, lass."

"I will," said Susan, a-making of cream cheese.

Anne's mother remonstrated: "She can't do it."

"Why not, sister?" said Susan's mother, sharply.

Then ensued some reasoning.

"Anne," said the tragedian's mother, "was born clever. I can't account for it. She was always mimicking. She took off the exciseman, and the farmers, and her grandmother, and the very parson. How she used to make us laugh! Mimicking! why, it was like a looking-glass, and the folk standing in front of it, and speaking behind it, all at one time. Once I made her take me off: she was very loath, poor lass. I think she knew she could not do it so well as the rest. It wasn't like, though it made them all laugh more than the others; but the others were as like as fagot to fagot. Now Susan, she can't take off anything, without 'tis the scald cream from the milk, and I've seen me beat her at that. I'm not bragging."

To this piece of ratiocination Susan's mother opposed the following:—

"Talent is in the blood," said she (this implies that great are all the first cousins of the great).

Anne's mother might have weakened this by examples at her own door; to wit, the exciseman, who was a clever fellow, and his son an ass. But she preferred keeping within her own line of argument, and as the ladies floated, by a law of their nature, away from that to which lawyers tend, an issue, they drifted divaguely over the great pacific ocean of feminine logic. At last a light shot into Susan's mamma; she found terra firma; i.e., an argument too strong for refutation.

"Besides, Jane," said she, "I want your Susan to churn! So there's an end!"

Alas! she had underrated the rival disputant. Susan's mother took refuge in an argument equally irrefragable: she packed up the girl's things that night, and sent her off by coach to Anne next morning.

Susan arrived, told her story and her hopes on Anne's neck. Anne laughed, and made room for her on the

third floor. The cousins went to the theatre that evening, the aspirant in front.

Susan passed through various emotions, and when Belvidera "gazed, turned giddy, raved and died," she ran to the stage-door, with some misgivings, whether she might not be wanted to lay her cousin out. In Anne's dressing-room she found a laughing dame, who, whilst wiping off her rouge, told her she was a fool, and asked her rather sharply, "how it went?"

"The people clapped their hands! I could have kissed them," said Susan.

"As if I could not hear that, child," said Anne. "I want to know how many cried where you were."

"Now, how can I tell you, cousin, when I could not see for crying myself?"

"You cried, did you? I am very glad of that!"

"La, cousin!"

"It does not prove much, but it proves more than their clapping of hands. You shall be my barber's block — you don't understand me — all the better — come home to supper."

At supper the tragedian made the dairy-maid tell her every little village event; and, in her turn, recalled all the rural personages; and, reviving the trick of her early youth, imitated their looks, manners, and sentiments, to the life.

She began with the exciseman, and ended with the curate — a white-headed old gentleman, all learning, piety, and simplicity. He had seen in this beautiful and gifted woman only a lamb that he was to lead up to heaven — please God.

The naughtiest things we do are sure to be the cleverest, and this imitation made Susan laugh more than the others.

But in the midst of it, the mimic suddenly paused, and

her eye seemed to turn inwards; she was quite silent for a moment.

Ah! Oldfield, in that one moment, I am sure your heart has drunk many a past year. It is away to the banks of Trent, to grass and flowers, and days of innocence, to church-bells and a cottage porch, and your mother's bosom, my poor woman—princess of the stage.

She faltered out, "But he was a good man. Oh! yes! yes! yes! he was a good man; he admired me more than he would now! None like him shine on my path now." And she burst into a fit of crying.

Susan cried with her, without in the least knowing what was the matter. And these most dissimilar beings soon learned to love one another. The next day Anne took the gauge of Susan's entire intellects; and, by way of comment on the text of Susan, connected her with dramatic poetry as Mrs. Oldfield's dresser.

Susan then had been installed about three months, when she was holding that conversation with the flower-girl, which I have too long interrupted.

"It is an odd thing to say, but I think you are in love with my cousin Anne."

"I don't know," was the answer. "I am drawn to her by something I cannot resist: I followed her home for three months before I spoke to you. Will she not be angry at my presumption?"

"La! Of course not; it is not as if you were one of those impudent men that follow her about, and slip notes into every mortal thing—her carriage, her prayer-book."

Now Susan happened to be laying out the new dress for Statira, which had just come in; and, in a manner singularly *appropos*, no less than two nice little notes fell out of it as she spoke.

The girls looked at them, as they lay on the floor, like deer looking askant at a lap-dog.

"Oh!" said the votary of Flora; "they ought to be ashamed."

"So they ought," cried Susan. "I'd say nothing," added she, "if some of them were for me. But I shall have them when I am an actress."

"Are you to be that? Ah! you will never be like *her*!"

"Why not? She is only my mother's sister's daughter, bless you. Anne was only a country lass like me at first starting, and that is why my mother sent me here, because when talent is in a family, don't let one churn all the butter, says she."

"But can you act?" interposed the other.

"Can't I?" was the answer.

"His fame survives the world in deathless story,

Nor heaven and earth combined can match his glory."

These lines, which in our day would be thought a leetle hyperbolical, Susan recited with gestures equally supernatural.

"Bless you," added she, complacently; "I could act fast enough, if I could but get the words off. Can you read?"

"Yes!"

"Handwriting? Tell the truth now."

"Yes! I can indeed."

"Handwriting is hard, is it not?" said Susan; "but a part beats all: did you ever see a part?"

"No."

"Well, I'll tell ye, girl! there comes a great scratch, and then some words: but don't you go for to say those words, because they belong to another gentleman, and he mightn't like it. Then you come in, and then another

scratch. And I declare it would puzzle Old Scratch to clear the curds from the whey" —

Susan suddenly interrupted herself, for she had caught sight of a lady slowly approaching from an adjoining room, the door of which was open. "Hush!" cried Susan; "here she is! alack, she is not well! Oh, dear! she is far from well!" And, in point of fact, the lady slowly entered the apartment, laboring visibly under a weight of disease. The poor flower-girl, naturally thinking this no time for her introduction, dropped a bouquet on the table, and retreated precipitately from the den of the sick lioness.

Then the lady opened her lips, and faltered forth the following sentence: —

"I go no further, let me rest here, Ænone!"

"Do, cousin!" said Susan, consolingly.

"I droop, I sink, my strength abandons me!" said the poor invalid.

"Here's a chair for y' Anne," cried Susan. "What is the matter?"

On this, the other, fixing her filmy eyes upon her, explained slowly and faintly, that "Her eyes were dazzled with returning day; her trembling limbs refused their wonted stay."

"Ah!" sighed she, and tottered towards the chair.

"She's going to faint — she's going to faint!" cried poor Susan. "Oh, dear! Here, quick! smell to this, Anne."

"That will do, then," said the other, in a hard, unfeeling tone. "I am fortunate to have satisfied your judgment, madam," added she.

Susan stood petrified, in the act of lunging with the smelling-bottle.

"That is the way I come on in that scene," explained Mrs. Oldfield, yawning in Susan's sympathetic face.

"Acting, by jingo!" screamed Susan. "You ought to be ashamed; I thought you were a dead woman. I wish you wouldn't," cried she, flying at her like a hen; "tormenting us at home, when there's nobody to see."

"It is my system—I aim at truth. You are unsophisticated, and I experiment on you," was the cool excuse.

"Cousin, when am *I* to be an actress?" inquired Susan.

"After fifteen years' labor, perhaps," was the encouraging response.

"Labor! I thought it was all in—spi—ration!"

"Many think so, and find their error. Labor and art are the foundation—inspiration is the result."

"O Anne," cried Susan, "now do tell me your feelings in the theatre."

"Well, Susan, first, I cast my eyes around, and try to count the house."

"No, no, Anne; I don't mean that."

"Well, then, child, at times upon the scene—mind, I say at times—the present does fade from my soul, and the great past lives and burns again; the boards seem buoyant air beneath me, child; that sea of English heads floats like a dream before me, and I breathe old Greece and Rome. I ride on the whirlwind of the poet's words, and wave my sceptre like a queen—ay, and a queen I am!—for kings govern millions of bodies, but I sway a thousand hearts! But, to tell the truth, Susan, when all is over, I sink back to woman—and often my mind goes home, dear, to our native town, where Trent glides so calmly through the meadows. I pine to be by his side, far from the dust of the scene, and the din of life—to take the riches of my heart from flatterers, strangers, and the world, and give them all, all, to one faithful heart, large, full and loving as my own! Where's my

dress for Statira, hussy?" She snapped this last with a marvellous quick change of key, and a sudden sharpness of tone peculiar to actresses when stage dresses are in question.

"Here it is. Oh! isn't it superb?"

"Yes, it is superb," said Oldfield, dryly; "velvet, satin, and ostrich feathers, for an Eastern queen. The same costume for Belvidera, Statira, Clytemnestra, and Mrs. Dobbs. O prejudice! prejudice! The stage has always been fortified against common-sense! Velvet Greeks, periwigged Romans — the audience mingling with the scene — past and present blundered together! English fops in the Roman forum, taking snuff under a Roman matron's nose (that's me), and cackling out that she does it nothing like (no more she does) — nothing like Peggy Porteous — whose merit was, that she died thirty years ago, whose merit would have been greater had she died fifty years ago, and much greater still had she never lived at all."

Here Susan offered her half a dozen letters, including the smuggled notes; but the sweet-tempered soul (being for the moment in her tantrums) would not look at them. "I know what they are," said she: "vanity, in marvellous thin disguises; my flatterers are so eloquent, that they will persuade me into marrying poor old Mannering — every morning he writes me four pages, and tells me my duty; every evening he neglects his own and goes to the theatre, which is unbecoming his age, I think."

"He looks a very wise gentleman," observed Susan.

"He does," was the rejoinder; "but his folly reconciles me in some degree to his wisdom; so, mark my words, I shall marry my silly sage. There, burn all the rest but his — no! don't burn the letter in verse."

"In verse?"

"Yes! I won't have him burnt either — for he loves

me, poor boy — find it, Susan; he never misses a day. I think I should like to know that one.”

“I think this is it,” said Susan.

“Then read it out expressively, whilst I mend this collar. So then I shall estimate your progress to the temple of Fame, ma’am.”

It is not easy to do justice on paper to Susan’s recitative; but, in fact, she read it much as schoolboys scan, and what she read to her cousin for a poet’s love hopped thus: —

“Excuse — mē dēār — ǣst frīend — if I — shoūld appēār
Tōð prēss — īng būt — āt mȳ — yēārs ōne — hās nōt
Mūch time — tō lōse — ānd yōūr — gōōd sēnsē — I fēēl ” —

“My good sense!” cried Mrs. Oldfield; “how can that be poetry?”

“It is poetry, I know,” remonstrated Susan. “See, cousin, it’s all of a length.”

“All of a length with your wit — that is the Manner-ing prose.”

“Drat them, if they write in lines, how is one to know their prose from their verse?” said Susan, spitefully.

“I’ll tell you, Susan,” said the other, soothingly; “their prose is something as like Mannering as can be, their verse is something in this style: —

‘You were not made to live from age to age;
The dairy yawns for you — and not the stage!’

“He, he!”

She found what she sought, and reading out herself the unknown writer’s verses, she said, with some feminine complacency, “Yes, this is a heart I have really penetrated.”

"I've penetrated one too," said Susan.

"Indeed!" was the reply, "how did you contrive that — not with the spit, I hope?"

Thus encouraged, Susan delivered herself most volubly of a secret that had long burned in her. She proceeded to relate how she observed a young gentleman always standing by the stage-door as they got into their chariot, and when they reached home, somehow he was always standing there too. "It was not for you, this one," said Susan, hastily, "because you are so wrapped up, he could not see you." Then she told her cousin how, once when they were walking separately, this same young gentleman had said to her most tenderly, "Madam, you are in the service of Mrs. Oldfield?" and, on another occasion, he had got as far as "Madam," when, unfortunately, her cousin looked round, and he vanished. Susan, then throwing off the remains of her reserve, and clasping her hands together, confessed she admired him as much as he did her. Susan gave this reason for her affection: "He is, for all the world, like one of the young tragedy princes, and you know what ducks they are."

"I do, to my cost," was the caustic reply. "I wish, instead of talking about this silly lover of yours, who must be a fool, or he would have made a fool of you long ago, you would find out who is the brave young gentleman who risked his life for me last month. Now I think of it, I am quite interested in him."

"Risked his life! and you never told me, Anne!"

"Robert told you, of course."

"No, indeed."

"Did he not? Then I will tell you the whole story. You have heard me speak of the Duchess of Tadcaster?"

"No, cousin, never."

"I wonder at that! Well, she and Lady Betty Bertie and I used to stroll in Richmond Park with our arms

round one another's waists, like the Graces, more or less, and kiss one another, ugh! and swear a deathless friendship, like liars and fools as we are. But Her Grace of Tadcaster had never anything to do, and I had my business; so I could not always be plagued with her; so for this, the little idiot now aspires to my enmity, and knowing none but the most vulgar ways of showing a sentiment, she bids her coachman drive her empty carriage against mine, containing me. Child, I thought the world was at an end: the glasses were broken, the wheels locked, and all my little sins began to appear such big ones to me; and the *brute* kept whipping the *horses*, and they plunged so horribly, when a brave young gentleman sprang to their heads, tore them away, and gave her nasty coachman such a caning." Here Oldfield clenched a charming white fist; then, lifting up her eyes, she said tenderly, "Heaven grant no harm befell him afterwards, for I drove off and left him to his fate."

Charming sensibility! an actress's!

In return for this anecdote, Susan was about to communicate some further particulars on the subject which occupied all her secret thoughts, when she was interrupted by a noise and scuffle in the anteroom, high above which were heard the loud, harsh tones of a stranger's voice, exclaiming, "But I tell ye I will see her, ye saucy Jack."

Before this personage bursts upon Mrs. Oldfield, and the rest of us, I must go back and take up the other end of my knot in the ancient town of Coventry.

Nathan Oldworthy dwelt there; a flourishing attorney; he had been a clerk; he came to be the master of clerks; his own ambition was satisfied; but his son Alexander, a youth of parts, became the centre of a second ambition. Alexander was to embrace the higher branch of the legal profession; was to be first pleader, then barrister,

then King's counsel — lastly, a judge; and contemporaneously with this final distinction, the old attorney was to sing "*Nunc Dimittis*," and "*Capias*" no more.

Bystanders are obliging enough to laugh at such schemes; but why? The heart is given to them, and they are no laughing matter to those who form them: such schemes destroyed, the flavor is taken out of human lives.

When Nathan sent his son to London, it was a proud though a sad day for him; hitherto he had looked upon their parting merely as the first step of a glorious ladder, but when the coach took young Alexander out of sight, the father found how much he loved him, and paced very, very slowly home, while Alexander glided contentedly on towards London.

Now, "London" means a different thing to every one of us: to one, it is the Temple of Commerce; to another, of Themis; to a third, of Thespis; and to a fourth, of the Paphian Venus, and so on, because we are all much narrower than men ought to be. To Nathan Oldworthy it was the sacred spot where grin the courts of law. To Alexander it was the sacred spot where (being from the country) he thought to find the nine Muses in bodily presence — his favorite Melpomene at their head. Nathan knew next to nothing about his own son, a not uncommon arrangement. Alexander, upon the whole, rather loathed law, and adored poetry. In those days youth had not learned to "frown in a glass, and write odes to despair," and be dubbed a duck by tender beauty confounding sulks with sorrow. Alexander had to woo the Muse clandestinely, and so wooed her sincerely. He went with a manuscript tragedy in his pocket, called "*Berenice*," which he had re-written and re-shaped three several times; with a head full of ideas, and a heart tuned to truth, beauty, and goodness. Arrived there, he

was installed in the neighborhood, and under the secret surveillance of his father's friend, Timothy Bateman, solicitor, of Gray's Inn.

If you had asked Alexander Oldworthy, upon the coach, who is the greatest of mankind, his answer would have been instantaneous: "A true poet!" But the first evening he spent in London raised a doubt of this in his mind, for he discovered a being brighter, nobler, truer, greater than even a poet.

At four Alexander reached London. At five he was in his first theatre.

That sense of the beautiful, which belongs to genius, made him see beauty in the semi-circular sweep of the glowing boxes; in gilt ornaments glorious with light; and, above all, in human beings gayly dressed, and radiant with expectation. And all these things are beautiful; only gross rustic senses cannot see it, and blunted town senses can see it no longer.

Before the play began, music attacked him on another side; and all combined with youth and novelty to raise him to a high key of intellectual enjoyment: and when the ample curtain rose slowly and majestically upon Mr. Otway's tragedy of "Venice Preserved," it was an era in this young life.

Poetry rose from the dead before his eyes this night. She lay no longer entombed in print. She floated around the scene, ethereal, but palpable. She breathed and burned in heroic shapes, and godlike tones, and looks of fire.

Presently, there glided among the other figures one that by enchantment seized the poet's eye, and made all that his predecessors had ever writ in praise of grace and beauty seem tame by comparison.

She spoke, and his frame vibrated to this voice. All his senses drank in her great perfections, and he thrilled

with wonder and enthusiastic joy, that this our earth contained such a being. He seemed to see the Eve of Milton with Madonna's glory crowning her head, and immortal music gushing from her lips.

The lady was Mrs. Oldfield — the Belvidera of the play.

Alexander thought he knew "Venice Preserved" before this; but he found, as the greatest wits must submit to discover, that in the closet a good play is but the corpse of a play; the stage gives it life. (The printed words of a play are about one-third of a play; the tones and varying melodies of beautiful and artful speech are another third; and the business, gesture, and that great visible story, the expression of the speaking, and the dumb play of the silent actors, is another third.)

Belvidera's voice, full, sweet, rich, piercing, and melodious, and still in its vast compass true to the varying sentiment of all she uttered, seemed to impregnate every line with double meaning, and treble beauty. Her author dilated into giant size and godlike beauty at the touch of that voice. And when she was silent, she still spoke to Alexander's eye, for her face was more eloquent than vulgar tongues are. Her dumb play from the first to the last moment of the scene was in as high a key as her elocution. Had she not spoken one single word, still she would have written in the air by the side of Otway's syllables, a great pictorial narrative, that filled all the chinks of his sketch with most rare and excellent colors of true flesh tint, and made that sketch a picture.

Here was a new art for our poet; and as, by that just arrangement which pervades the universe, "acting" is the most triumphant of all the arts, to compensate it for being the most evanescent, what wonder that he thrilled beneath its magic, and worshipped its priestess?

He went home filled with a new sense of being — all seemed cold, dark, and tame, until he could return and see this poetess-orator-witch and her enchantments once more.

In those days they varied the entertainments in London almost as they do in the provinces now; and Alexander, who went to the theatre six nights a week, saw Mrs. Oldfield's beauty and talent in many shapes. Her power of distinct personation was very great. Her Andromache, her Ismena, and Belvidera were all different beings. Also each of her tragic personations left upon the mind a type. One night young Oldworthy saw majesty, another tenderness, another fiery passion, personified and embodied in a poetic creation.

But a fresh surprise was in store for him: the next week comedy happened to be in the ascendant; and Mrs. Oldfield, whose *entrée* in character was always the keynote of her personation, sprang upon the stage as Lady Townley, and in a moment the air seemed to fill with singing birds that chirped the pleasures of youth, beauty, and fashion in notes that sparkled like diamonds, stars, and prisms. Her genuine, gushing gayety warmed the coldest and cheered the forlornest heart. Nor was she less charming in the last act, where Lady Townley's good-sense being at last alarmed, and her good heart touched, she bowed her saucy head, and begged her lord's pardon, with tender, unaffected penitence. The tears stood thick in Alexander's eyes during that charming scene, where in a prose comedy, the author has had the courage and the beauty to spread his wings and rise in a moment into verse with the rising sentiment.

To this succeeded "Maria" in "The Nonjuror," and "Indiana" in what the good souls of that day were pleased to call the comedy of "The Conscious Lovers," in the course of which comedy Indiana made Alexander

weep more constantly, continuously, and copiously than in all the tragedies of the epoch he had as yet witnessed.

So now Alexander Oldworthy lived for the stage; and, as the pearl is a disease of the oyster, so this siren became Alexander's disease. The enthusiast lost his hold of real life. Real life became to him an *interlude*, and soon that followed which was to be expected, — the poor novice who had begun by adoring the artist ended by loving the woman, and he loved her like a novice and a poet: he looked into his own heart, confounded it with hers, and clothed her with every heroic quality. He believed her as great in mind, and as good in heart, as she was lovely in person; and he would have given poems to be permitted to kiss her dress, or to lay his neck for a moment under her foot. Burning to attract her attention, yet too humble and timid to make an open attempt, he had at last recourse to his own art. Every day he wrote verses upon her, and sent them to her house. Every night after the play he watched at the stage-door for a glimpse of her as she came out of the theatre to her carriage, and, being lighter of foot than the carriage horses of his century, he generally managed to catch another glimpse of her as she stepped from her carriage into her own house.

But all this led to no results, and Alexander's heart was often very cold and sick. Whilst he sat at the play he was in Elysium; but when, after seeing his divinity vanish, he returned to his lodgings, and looked at his attachment by the light of one candle, despondency fell like a weight of ice upon him, and he was miserable till he had written her some verses. The verses writ, he was miserable till play-time.

One night he stood, as usual, at the stage-door after the performance watching for Mrs. Oldfield, who, in a

general way, was accompanied by her cousin Susan. This night, however, she was alone; and, having seen her enter her chariot, Alexander was about to start for her house to see her get down from it, when suddenly another carriage came into contact with Mrs. Oldfield's. The collision was violent, and Mrs. Oldfield screamed with unaffected terror, at which scream Alexander sprang to the horses of the other carriage, and, seizing one of them just above the curb, drew him violently back. To his surprise, instead of co-operating with him, the adverse coachman whipped both his horses, and, whether by accident or design, the lash fell twice on Alexander. Jehu never made a worse investment of whipcord. The young man drew himself back upon the pavement, and sprang with a single bound upon the near horse's quarters, from thence to the coach-box. Contemporaneously with his arrival there he knocked the coachman out of his seat on to the roof of his carriage, and then seized his whip, broke it in one moment into a stick, and belabored the prostrate charioteer till the blood poured from him in torrents. Then, springing to the ground with one bound, he turned the horses' heads, threshed them with the mutilated whip, and off they trotted gently home.

Alexander ran to Mrs. Oldfield's carriage-window, his cheeks burning, his eyes blazing. "They are gone, madam," said he, with rough timidity. The actress looked at him, and smiled on him, and said, "So I see, sir, and I am much obleeged to you." She was then about to draw back to her corner, but suddenly she reflected, and half beckoning Alexander, who had drawn back, she said, "My dear, learn for me whose carriage that was." Alexander turned to gain the information, but it was volunteered by one of the bystanders.

"It is the Duchess of Tadcaster's, Mrs. Oldfield."

"Ah!" cried Mrs. Oldfield, "the little wretch! (This polite phrase she uttered with a most majestic force of sovereign contempt.) Thank you, sir. Bid Robert drive me home, my child" (this to Alexander), on which a bystander sang out, "You are to drive home, Robert,—Buckingham Gate, the corner house."

At this sally Mrs. Oldfield smiled with perfect composure, but did not look at the speaker. As the carriage moved she leaned gently forward, and kissed her hand like a queen to Alexander, then nestled into her corner and went to sleep.

Alexander did nothing of the sort that night. He went home on wings. He could not go in. He walked up and down before his door three hours, before he could go to so vulgar a thing as bed. As a lover will read over fifty times six lines of love from the beloved hand, so Alexander acted over and over the little scene of this night, and dwelt on every tone, word, look, and gesture of the great creature who had at last spoken to him, smiled on him, thanked him. Oh, how happy he was! he could hardly realize his bliss. "My dear;" but had not his ears deceived him?—had she really called him "my dear," and what was he to understand by so unexpected an address? was it on account of the service he had just done her, or might he venture to hope she had noticed his face in the theatre, sitting, as he always did, in one place, at the side of the second row of the pit? but no! he rejected that as impossible. Whatever she meant by it, his blood was at her service as well as his heart. He blessed her with tears in his eyes for using such heavenly words to him in any sense—"my dear," and "my child." He framed these words in his heart.

Alas! he little thought that "my dear" meant literally nothing—he was not aware that calling every living creature "my dear" is one of the nasty little tricks of

the stage — like their swearing without anger, and their shovelling snuff into their nose without intermission, in the innocent hope of making every sentence intellectual, by a dirty thing done mechanically, and not intellectually. As for “my child,” that was better — that was, at least, a trick of the lady’s own, partly caught from her French acquaintances.

For some days Alexander was in heaven. He fell upon his tragedy, he altered it by the light the stage had given him ; above all, he heightened and improved the heroine, he touched her and retouched her with the colors of Oldfield — and this done, with trembling hands, he wrapped it in brown paper, addressed it, and left it at her own house, and no sooner had Susan’s hand touched it, than he fled like a guilty thing.

You see it was his first love — and she he loved seemed more than mortal to him.

And now came a reaction. Days and days rolled by, and no more adventures came, no means of making acquaintance with one so high above his reach.

He was still at the stage-door, but she did not seem to recognize him, and he dared not recall himself to her recollection. His organization was delicate — he began to fret and lose his sleep, and at last his pallor and listlessness attracted the not very keen eye of Timothy Bateman. Mr. Bateman asked him twenty times if anything was the matter — twenty times he answered, “No !” At last, good, worthy, commonplace Bateman, after dinner and deep thought, said one day, “Alexander, I’ve found out what it is.” Alexander started.

“Money melts in London ; yours is gone quicker than you thought it would ; — my poor lad, don’t you fret. I’ve got twenty pounds to spare, here ’tis. Your father will never know. I’ve been young as well as you.” Alexander grasped the good old fellow’s hand and

pressed it to his heart. He never looked at the note, but he looked, half tenderly, half wildly, into the old man's eyes.

Bateman read this look aright — "Ay, out with it, young man," he cried; "never keep a grief locked up in your heart, whilst you have a friend that will listen to it, that is an old man's advice."

On this poor Alexander's story gushed forth. He told Bateman the facts I have told you, only his soul, and all the feelings he had gone through, gushed from his heart of hearts. They sat till one in the morning, and often as the young heart laid bare its enthusiasm, its youth, its anguish, the dry old lawyer found out there was a soft bit left in his own, that sent the woman to the door of his eyes, for Alexander told his story differently, and I think on the whole better, than I do. I will just indicate *one* difference between us two as narrators — he told it like blood and fire, I tell it like criticism and ice, and be hanged to me.

Perhaps, had Alexander told the tale as I do, Bateman, man of the world, would have sneered at him, or sternly advised him to quit this folly and whim; but as it was, Bateman was touched, and mingled pity with good, gentle, but firm advice, and poor Alexander was grateful. The poet revered the commonplace good man, as a poet ought, and humbly prayed him to save him by his wisdom. He owned that he was mad, — that he was indulging a hopeless passion, that he knew the great tragedian, courted by the noble and rich of the land, would never condescend even to an acquaintance with him. And, bursting into a passion of tears, "Oh! good Mr. Bateman," cried he, "the most unfortunate hour of my life was that in which I first saw her, for she will be my death, for she will never permit me to live for her, and without her life is intolerable to me."

This last feature decided Timothy Bateman ; the next morning he wrote to Nathan Oldworthy a full account of all. "Come up, and take him home again for heaven's sake."

It fell like a thunderbolt on the poor father, but he moved promptly ; in two hours he was on the road to London.

Arrived there, he straight invaded Alexander. The poet, luckily for himself, was not at home. He then went to Bateman ; he was in a towering passion.

The old puritanical leaven was scotched, but not killed, in Coventry.

In a general way, Nathan looked on love as no worse than one of the Evil One's many snares, to divert youth from law — but love of an actress ! If you had asked Coventry whether the playhouse or the public-house ruins the manners, morality, and intellect of England, Coventry was capable of answering : "The playhouse." He raged against the fool and the jade, as he succinctly, and not inaptly, described a dramatic poet and an actress.

His friend endeavored to stop the current of his wrath, in vain : the attempt only diverted its larger current from Alexander to the siren who had fascinated him. In vain Bateman assured him that affairs had proceeded to no length between the parties : the other snubbed him, called him a fool, that knew nothing of the world, and assured him that if anything came of it, she should have nothing from the Oldworthys, but thirty pence per week, the parish allowance (Nathan's ideas of love were as primitive as Alexander's were poetic), and lastly, bouncing up, he announced that he was going to see the hussy, and force her to give up her Delilah designs.

At this, poor Bateman was in dismay ; he represented to this mad bull, that Mrs. Oldfield was "on the windy

side of the law," that there were no proofs she had done anything more than every woman would do, if she was clever enough; viz., turn every man's head; he next reminded him of her importance, and implored him at least to be prudent. "My dear friend," said he, "there are at least a score of gentlemen in this town, who would pass their swords through an old attorney, as they would through a mad dog, only to have a smile or a compliment from this lady."

This last argument was ill chosen. The old Puritan was game to the backbone; he flung Mrs. Oldfield's champions a grim grin of defiance, and marched out to invade that lady, and save his offspring.

Now, the said Mrs. Oldfield, wishing to be very quiet, because she was preparing to play for the championship of the stage, and was studying Statira, had given her footman orders to admit no living soul, upon any pretence.

Oldworthy, who had heard in Coventry that people in London are always at home if their servants say they are out, pushed past the man; the man followed him remonstrating. When they reached the ante-chamber, he thought it was time to do more, so he laid his hand on the intruder's collar — then ensued a short but very brisk scuffle; the ladies heard, to their dismay, a sound as of a footman falling from the top to the bottom of a staircase: and the next moment, in jack-boots splashed with travel, an immense hat of a fashion long gone by, his dark cheek flushed with anger, and his eyes shooting sombre lightning from under their thick brows, Nathan Oldworthy strode like wild-fire into the room.

Susan screamed, and Anne turned pale, but, recovering herself, she said, with a wonderful show of spirit, "How dare you intrude on me? — Keep close to me, stupid!" was her trembling aside to Susan.

"I'm used to enter people's houses, whether they will or not," was the gruff reply.

"Your business, sir?" said Mrs. Oldfield, with affected calmness.

"It is not fit for that child to hear," was the answer.

Anne Oldfield was wonderfully intelligent, and even in this remark, she saw the man, if a barbarian, was not a ruffian. She looked towards Susan.

Susan, interpreting her look, declined to leave her alone "with, with" —

"A brute, I suppose," said Nathan, coarsely.

The artist measured the man with her eye.

"He who feels himself a brute, is on the way to be a man," said she, with genuine dignity; so saying, she dismissed Susan with a gesture.

"You are the play-acting woman, aren't you?" said he.

"I am the tragedian, sir," replied she, "whose time is precious."

"I'll lose no time — I'm an attorney, — the first in Coventry. I'm Nathan Oldworthy. My son's education has been given him under my own eye. I taught him the customs of the country, and the civil law. He is to be a sergeant-at-law, and a sergeant-at-law he shall be."

"I consent for one," said Oldfield, demurely.

"And then we can play into one another's hands, as should be."

"I have no opposition to offer to this pretty little scheme of the Old Somethings — father and son."

"Oldworthys! no opposition! when he hasn't been once to Westminster, and every night to the play-house."

"Oh!" said the lady, "I see! the old story."

"The very day the poor boy came here," resumed

Nathan, "there was a tragedy play; so because a woman sighed and burned for sport, the fool goes home and sighs and burns in earnest, can't eat his victuals, flings away his prospects, and thinks of nothing but this Nance Oldfield."

He uttered this appellation with rough contempt; and had the actress been a little one, this descent to Nance Oldfield would have mortified or enraged her. But its effect on the great Oldfield was different, and somewhat singular; she opened her lovely eyes on him.

"Nance Oldfield!" cried she. "Oh, sir, nobody has called me that name since I left my little native town."

"Haven't they, though?" said the rough customer more gently, responding to her heavenly tones, rather than to the sentiment, which he in no degree comprehended.

"No!" said Oldfield, with an ill-used Æolian-harp tone.

Here the attorney began to suspect she was diverting him from the point, and, with a curl of the lip, and a fine masculine contempt for all subterfuges—not on sheepskin,— "You had better say you do not know all this," cried he.

"Not I," was the reply. "My good sir, your son has left you to confide to me the secret of his attachment: you have discharged the commission, Sir Pandarus of Troy," added she, with a world of malicious fun in her jewel-like eye.

"Nathan Oldworthy of Coventry, I tell ye!" put in the angry sire.

"And it is now my duty to put some questions to you," resumed the actress. "Is your son handsome?" said she, in a sly half whisper.

"Is not he?" answered gaunt simplicity, "and well built too—he is like me, they say."

OF ACADEMY

He snatched the letter



"There is a point on which I am very particular. — Has he nice teeth? — upon your honor, now."

"White as milk, ma'am; and a smile that warms your heart up; fresh color; — there's not such a lad in Coventry." Here the old boy caught sight of a certain poetical epistle which, if you remember, was in Mrs. Oldfield's hands.

"And pray, madam," said he with smooth craft, "does Alexander Oldworthy never write to you?"

"Never," was her answer.

"She says never!" thundered Nathan, "and there is his letter in her very hand, — a superb handwriting; what a waste of talent to write to you with it, instead of engrossing; what does the fool say?" and he snatched the letter rudely from her, and read out poor Alexander, with the lungs of a Stentor.

Gracious me! if I was puzzled to show the reader how Susan read the Mannering prose, how on earth shall I make him hear and see Oldworthy *père* read Oldworthy *fils* his rhymes; but I will attempt a faint adumbration, wherein glorious Apollo, from on high, befriend us!

"My soul hangs trembling — (full stop.) On that magic voice, grieves with your woe — (full stop.) Exults when you rejoice. A golden chain — (here he cast a look of perplexity.) I feel but cannot see — (here he began to suspect Alexander of insanity.) Binds earth to heaven — (of impiety, ditto.) It ties my heart to thee like a sunflower." And now the reader wore the ill-used look of one who had been betrayed into a labyrinth of unmeaning syllables; but at this juncture, thanks to his sire, Alexander Oldworthy began to excite Mrs. Oldfield's interest.

"And that poetry is his!" said the actress.

"Poetry? no! How could my son write poetry? I'll

be hanged if 't isn't though, for all the lines begin with a capital letter."

Oldfield took the paper from him. "Listen," said she, and with a heavenly cadence and expression, she spoke the lines thus:—

' My soul hangs trembling on that magic voice,
Grieves with your woe, exults when you rejoice;
A golden chain I feel, but cannot see,
Binds earth to heaven—it ties my heart to thee,
Like a sunflower,' etc. —

"What do you call that, eh?"

"Why, honey dropping from the comb," said the astounded lawyer, to whom the art of speech was entirely unknown until that moment, as it is to millions of the human race.

"It is honey dropping from the comb," repeated Nathan. "I see, he has been and bought it ready-made, and it has cost him a pretty penny, no doubt. So, now his money's going to the dogs, too."

"And these sentiments, these accents of poetry and truth, that have reached my heart, this daily homage that would flatter a queen, do I owe it to your son? Oh! sir."

"Good gracious heavens!" roared the terrified father; "don't *you* go and fall in love with *him*; and, now I think on't, that is what I have been working for ever since I came here. Cut it short. I came for my son, and I will have him back, if you please. Where is he?"

"How can I know?" said the lady, pettishly.

"Why, he follows you everywhere."

"Except here, where he never will follow me, unless his father teaches him housebreaking under the head of civil law."

At this sudden thrust, Oldworthy blushed. "Well,

ma'am!" stammered he, "I was a little precipitate; but, my good lady, pray tell me, when did you last see him?"

"I never saw him at all, which I regret," added she, satirically; "because you say he resembles his father." Nathan was a particular ugly dog.

"She is very polite," thought Nathan. "But," objected he, "you must have learned from his letters" —

"That they are not signed!" said she, handing the poetical epistle to him, with great significance.

Mr. Nathan Oldworthy began now to doubt whether he was *sur le bon terrain* in his present proceedings; and the error in which he had detected himself made him suddenly suspect his judgment and general report on another head. "What an extraordinary thing!" said he, bluntly. "Perhaps you are an honest woman, after all, ma'am!"

"Sir!" said Oldfield, with a most tragic air.

"I ask your pardon, ma'am! I ask your pardon!" cried the other, terrified by the royal pronounciation of this monosyllable. "Country manners, ma'am! that is all! We do speak so straightforward down in Coventry."

"Yes! but if you speak so straightforward here, you will be sent to Coventry."

"I'll take care not, madam! I'll take great care not!" said the other, hastily. Then he paused — a light rose gradually to his eye. "Sent to Coventry! ha! haw! ho! But, madam, this love will be his ruin: it will rob him of his profession which he detests, and of a rich heiress whom he can't abide. Since I came here I think better of play-actors; but, consider, madam, we don't like our blood to come down in the world!"

"It *would* be cruel to lower an attorney," replied the play-actress, looking him demurely in the face.

"You are considerate, madam!" replied he gratefully. He added with manly compunction, "More so, I fear, than I have deserved."

"*Mais ! il me désarme, cet homme !*" cried the sprightly Oldfield, ready to scream with laughter.

"Are you speaking to me, ma'am?" said Nathan severely.

"No, that was an 'aside.' Go on, my good soul!"

"Then forgive the trouble, the agitation, of a father: his career, his happiness, is in danger."

"Now, why did you not begin with that? it would have saved your time and mine. Favor me with your attention, sir, for a moment," said the fine lady with grave courtesy.

"I will, madam," said the other, respectfully.

"Mr. Oldworthy, first you are to observe, that I have by the constitution of these realms as much right to fall in love with your son, or even with yourself, as he or you have to do with me."

"So you have: I never thought of that; but don't ye do it, for heaven's sake, if 't isn't done already."

"But I should have been inclined, even before your arrival, to waive that right out of regard for my own interest and reputation, especially the former: and now you have won my heart, and I enter into your feelings, and place myself at your service."

"You are very good, madam! Now why do they go and run play-actors down so?"

"You are aware, sir, that we play-actors have not an idea of our own in our skulls: our art is to execute beautifully the ideas of those who think: now, you are a man of business; you will therefore be pleased to give me your instructions, and you shall see those instructions executed better than they are down in Coventry. You want me to prevent your son from loving me. I consent. Tell me how to do it."

"Madam!" said Nathan, "you have put your finger on the very point. What a lawyer you would have made! Madam, I thank you! Very well, then you must — but, no, that will make him worse perhaps. And again, you can't leave off playing, *can* you? because that is your business, you know — dear me. Ah! I'll tell you how to bring it about. Let me see — no! — yes! — no! drat it!"

"Your instructions are not sufficiently clear, sir," suggested Mrs. Oldfield.

"Well, madam, it is not so easy as I thought, and I don't see what instructions I am to give you, until — until" —

"Until I tell you what to tell me. That's fair. Well, give me a day to think. I am so busy now. I must play my best to-night."

"But he'll be there," said Nathan, in dismay; "you'll play your best: you'll burn him to a cinder: I'll go to him." He ran to the window, informing his companion that, for the first time in his life, he was going to take a coach. But he had no sooner arrived at the window, than he made a sudden point, and beckoned the lady to him, without removing his eyes from some object on which he glared down with a most singular expression of countenance. She came to his side. He directed her eyes to the object. "Look there, ma'am; look there!" She peeped, and standing by a hosier's shop, at the corner of the street, she descried a young man engaged as follows: his hat was in his hand, and on the hat was a little piece of paper. He was alternately writing on this, and looking upward for inspiration.

"Is that he?" whispered Mrs. Oldfield.

"Yes, that's your man — bareheaded, looking up into the sky, and doesn't see how it rains."

"But he is very handsome, Mr. Oldworthy, and you said he was like — hem! yes, he is very handsome."

"Isn't he, madam?"

He was handsome — his rich chestnut curls flowed down his neck in masses; his face was oval; his eyes full of color and sentiment; and in him the purple light of youth was brightened by the electric light of expression and charming sensibility.

The strangely assorted pair in our scene held on by one another the better to inspect the young poet, who little thought what a pair of critics were in store for him.

"What a bright, intelligent look the silly goose has!" said the actress.

"Hasn't he? the dear — idiot!" said the parent.

"Is he waiting for you, sir?" said she, with affected simplicity.

"No," replied he with real; "it's you he is waiting for."

Alexander began to walk slowly past the house, looking up to heaven every now and then for inspiration, and then looking down and scribbling a bit, like a hen drinking, you know: and thus occupied, he stalked to and fro, passing and repassing beneath the criticising eyes — at sight of which pageant a father's fingers began to work, and, "Madam," said he, with a calmness too marked to be genuine, "do let me fling one little — chair at his silly head."

"No, indeed."

"A pillow, then?"

"O Lud, no! You don't know these boys, sir! he would take that as an overture of affection from the house. Stay, will you obey me, or will you not?"

"Of course I will! how can I help?" and he grinned with horrible amiability.

"Then I will cure your son."

"You will, you promise me?"

"On the honor of—a play-actor!" and she offered him, with a world of grace, the loveliest hand going at that era.

"Of an angel, I think," said the subjugated barbarian.

Mrs. Oldfield then gave him a short sketch of the idea that had occurred to her. "Your son, sir," said she, "is in love by the road of imagination and taste—he has seen upon the stage a being more likē a poet's dream than any young woman down in Coventry, and he overrates her; I will contrive that in ten minutes he shall underrate her. I will also find means to wound his vanity, which is inordinate in all his sex, and gigantic in the versifying part of it—and then, sir, I promise that your son's love, so fresh, so fiery, so lofty, so humble, will either turn to hatred or contempt, or else quietly evaporate like a mist, and vanish like a morning dream. Ah!"—and she could not help sighing a little.

Susan was then called, and directed to show Mr. Nathan Oldworthy out the back way, that he might avoid the encounter of his son. The said Nathan accordingly marched slap away in four great strides; but the next moment the door burst open, and he returned in four more—he took up a position opposite his fair entertainer, and, with much gravity, executed a solemn but marvellously grotesque bow intended to express gratitude and civility; this done, he recovered body, and strode away again slap-dash.

Spirits like Alexander's are greatly depressed and greatly elevated without proportionate change in the external causes of joy and grief. It is theirs to view the same set of facts rose-color one day, lurid another. Two days ago Alexander had been in despondence; to-day hope was in the ascendant, and his destiny appeared to

him all bathed in sunshine. He was rich in indistinct but gay hopes; these hopes had whispered to him, that, after all, an alliance between a dramatic poet and a tragedian was a natural one — that, perhaps, on reflection, she he loved might not think it so very imprudent. He felt convinced she had read “Berenice” — she would see the alterations in the heroine’s part, and that love had dictated them. She would find there was one being that comprehended her. That and his verses would surely plead his cause. Then he loved her so — who could love her as he did? Some day she would feel that no heart could love her so; and then he would say to her, “I am truth and nature; you are beauty and music — united, we should conquer the world, and be the world to one another!” Poor boy!

He was walking and dreaming thus beneath her window, when his ear caught the sound of that window opening; he instantly cowered against the wall, hoping this happy day to see the form he loved, himself unseen, when, to his immeasurable surprise, a beautiful girl put her head out of the window, and called softly to him. He took no notice, because it was inaudible. She had to repeat the call before he could realize his good-fortune; the signal, however, was unmistakable, and soon after the door opened, and there was pretty Susan blushing. Alexander ran to her; she opened the door wider; he entered, believing in magic for the first time. Susan took him up-stairs — he said nothing — he could not — she did not speak, because she thought he ought to. At last they reached a richly-furnished room, where Statira’s dress lay upon a chair, and a theatrical diadem upon a table. Alexander’s heart leaped at sight of these; he knew then where he was; he turned hot and cold, and trembled violently. The first word Susan said did not calm his agitation. “There is a lady here,” said she, “who has something to say to you.”

Now, it must be remembered, that Susan considered Alexander her undoubted property, and when she was told to introduce him she could not help thinking how kind it was of her cousin to take her part, and bring to the point a young gentleman, who, charming in other respects, was sadly deficient in audacity. "Sit down," said Susan, smiling.

Oh, no! he could not sit down here! Susan pitied his timidity, and his discomposure, and to put both him and herself out of pain the sooner, she left him and went to announce his presence to her cousin and guardian as she now considered her.

Alexander was left alone to all appearance; in reality, he was in a crowd — a crowd of "thick-coming fancies." He was to breathe the same air as her, to be by her side, whom the world adored at a distance; he was to see her burst on him like the sun, and to feel more strongly than ever how far his verse fell short of the goddess who inspired it; he half wished to retreat from his too great happiness. Suddenly a rustle in the apartment awakened him from his rich reverie; he looked up, and there was a lady with her eyes fixed on him.

The lady had on what might, without politeness, but with truth, be called a dressing-gown; it was ostentatiously large everywhere, especially at the waist. The lady's hair, or what seemed her hair, was rough, and ill done up, and a great cap of flaunty design surmounted her head. On her feet were old slippers.

"Good-day, sir!" said she, dryly.

Alexander bowed. "Madam! I await Mrs. Oldfield."

"*Tête-à-tête* with your Muse." Alexander's poetical works were in her hand.

"She is my Muse, madam!" replied he; "she alone. Are you not proud of her, madam? for I see by your likeness that you are some relation."

The lady burst out laughing: "That's a compliment to my theatrical talent; I am the party."

"You Mrs. Oldfield! the great Mrs. Oldfield!"

"Why not? What! you come from the country, I suppose, and think we are to be always on stilts, when we are not paid for it. You look as if you were afraid of me."

"Oh, no, madam! and, as you say, it shows how great your talent is."

"You want to speak to me, my lad."

Alexander blushed to the temples. "Yes, madam," faltered he, "you have divined my ambition. I have been presumptuous — but I saw you on the tragic scene — the admiration you inspired — I fear I have importuned you — but my hope, my irresistible desire" —

"There, I know what you mean," said she with an affectation of vulgar good-nature, "you want an order for the pit."

"I want an order for the pit?" gasped Alexander, faintly.

"Well, ain't I going to give you one," answered she, as sharp as a needle; "but mind, you must" — here she imitated vehement applause.

"O madam! I need no such injunction," cried Alexander, "each of your achievements on the stage seems to me greater than the last." Then, trembling, blushing, and eloquent as fire, he poured out his admiration of her, and her great art: "The others are all puppets, played by rule, around you, the queen of speech and poetry; your pathos is so true, your sensibility so profound; yours are real tears; you lead our sorrow in person; you fuse your soul into those great characters, and art becomes nature: you are the thing you seem, and it is plain each lofty emotion passes through that princely heart on its way to those golden lips."

Oldfield, with all her self-command, could not quite resist the eloquence of the heart and brain. She, too, now blushed a little, and her lovely bosom heaved slowly, but high, as the poet poured the music of his praise into her ears; then she stole a look at him, from under her long lashes, and sipped his beauty and his freshness. She could not help looking at this forbidden fruit. As she looked, she did feel how hard, how cruel it was, that she was not to be allowed to play with this young, fresh heart; to see it throb with hopes and fears, and love, jealousy, anguish, joy, and finally to break it, and fling the pieces to the devil, but she was a singular character — she was the concentrated essence of female in all points, except one: she was a woman of her word, or, as some brutes would say, no woman at all in matters of good faith. She stood pledged to the attorney, and therefore, recovering herself, she took up Alexander thus: —

“No, thank you; emotions pass through my, what’s the name — well, you *are* green — you don’t come from the country — you are from Wales. I must enlighten you; sit down; sit down, I tell you. The tears, my boy, are as real as the rest — as the sky, and that’s pasteboard — as the sun, and he is three candles smirking upon all nature, which is canvas — they are as real as ourselves, the tragedy queens, with our cries, our sighs, and our sobs, all measured out to us by the five-foot rule. Reality, young gentleman, *that* begins when the curtain falls, and we wipe off our profound sensibility along with our rouge, our whiting, and our beauty spots.”

“Impossible!” cried the poet, “those tears, those dew-drops on the tree of poetry!”

He was requested not to make her “die of laughing” with his tears; his common-sense was appealed to.

"Now, my good soul, if I was to vex myself night after night, for Clytemnestra & Co., don't you see that I should not hold together long? No, thank you! I've got 'Nance Oldfield' to take care of, and what's Hecuba to her? For my part," continued this frank lady, "I don't understand half the authors give us to say."

"Oh, yes, you do! you write upon our eyes and ears more than half of all the author gains credit for—the noblest sentiments gain more from your tongue than the pen, great as it is, could ever fling upon paper—I am unworthy to be your companion!"

"Nonsense! do you really think I am like those black parrots of tragedy?—fine company I should be!—he, he!—No! we are like other women, you can court us without getting a dagger stuck into you." She then informed him that the representatives of Desdemona, Belvidera, Cordelia, and Virgin Purity in general, had all as many beaux as they could lay their hands on—that she had twenty at the present moment; that he could join that small but select band, if he chose, secure of this, that whether a fortunate or unfortunate lover, there would be companions of his fate—then suddenly interrupting her disclosures, she offered him a snuff-box, and said, dryly, "D'ye snuff?"

Alexander's eye dilated with horror. She observed him, and explained, "There's no doing without it, in our business: we get so tired!" here she yawned as only actresses yawn,—like one going out of the world in four pieces: "We get so tired of the whole concern. This is the real source of our inspiration," said she, taking a pinch, "or how should we ever rise to the poet's level, and launch all those awful execrations they love so! as, for instance—Ackishoo!—God bless you!"

Alexander groaned aloud.

"Poor boy!" thought his tormentor, "how he takes it to heart!"

"Why, ma'am, a fall from heaven to earth is a considerable descent."

"You look pale, my child," resumed the tormentor. "No breakfast, perhaps. I'd offer you some in a minute, but the fact is, I look to every penny; when the rainy day comes I shall be ready," and she brought both hands down upon her knees, in a way the imitated vulgarity of which would have made any one scream with laughter that had seen her game; but it was all genuine to our poor poet, and crushed him.

Having opened this vein of self-depreciation, she proceeded to work it. She poked him with one finger, and, looking slyly with half-shut eye at him, she announced herself the authoress of some very curious calculations, the object of which was to discover by comparing the week's salary with the lines in the night's performance, the exact value of poetical passages, generally supposed to be invaluable. "Listen," said she, —

"Come! come, you spirits

That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here!"

They are worth just tenpence."

Alexander, who had been raised by the poetry, was depressed by its arithmetic.

She recommenced, —

"That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor Heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry hold! hold! — Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!"

Making the point on "Great Glamis," at Macbeth's entrance, not on "hold," which is done nowadays, and is too cruel silly.

"Ah! you are yourself again," cried the poet.

"Yes; I am myself again!" was the dry answer: "those bring me in 2s. 8d. every time."

And this was the being he had adored! He had invested this creature with his own prismatic hues, and taken her for a rainbow.

Mrs. Oldfield told afterwards that she felt herself cutting his heart away from her at every sentence. "But it was to be done." She continued, "So now you know my trade, tell me, what is yours?"

"One I used to despise — an advocate."

"Ah! a little long robe; they are actors too, only bad ones; but tell me," said she, with a silly, coquettish manner, borrowed from the comedy of the day, "what do you want of me? You have not followed me so perseveringly for nothing! Speak, what have you to tell me?"

Alexander blushed: he had no longer the stimulus to tell her all he had felt and hoped; he hesitated and stammered: at last he bethought him of his tragedy; so he said, "I sent you a tragedy, madam."

"What! do they do that in Warwickshire?"

"Yes, madam; I composed it by stealth in my father's office."

Oldfield smiled.

Alexander continued, "It is called from the heroine of the play, 'Berenice.'"

"Berenice!" cried the actress, with a start.

Now this tragedy had pleased Mrs. Oldfield more than any manuscript she had seen these three years; but, above all, the part of Berenice had charmed her: it fitted her like a glove, as she poetically expressed herself; it was written in Alexander's copper-plate hand, so she had not identified it with the author of her diurnal verses.

"Berenice! is it possible?"

"A queen, madam, who, captured by the Romans" —

"What, sir! you the author of that work?" said she, with sudden respect.

"Favor me with your opinion," said the sanguine poet.

Tremble, Nathan! You had only her womanly weakness to dread hitherto; but now the jade's interest is against you. Strange to say, her promise carried the day: she was true as steel to Nathan, and remorseless as steel to Alexander. She saw at once that no middle course was now tenable; so she turned on the poor poet, not without secret regret, and with a voice of ice she said, "The town is tired of Romans, my good sir: you had better go into Tartary. Besides," added she, jumping at the commonplaces of dramatic censure, "your fable does not march, your language wants fire: let me give you a word of advice, or rather a line of advice, 'Plead, Alexander, plead, and rhyme no more!'" She then added hastily, in a very different tone and manner, "Forgive me, my poor child; you will make more money and be more respected."

The reason of this rapid change of manner was this — when we have given dreadful pain, more pain than we calculated on, and see it, we are apt to try and qualify it with a little weak, empty good-nature. Now at her verdict and her witty line, Alexander had turned literally as pale as ashes. The drop of oil she poured on the deadly wounds she had given was no comfort to him; he rose, he tried to speak to her, but his lip trembled so violently, he could not articulate; at last he gasped out, "Thank you for undeceiving me — you have taught me your own v-value; and m-mine. Forgive me the time I have made you waste upon a d-dunce." And then, in spite of all he could do, the tears forced themselves through the poor boy's eyes; and casting one look of shame and half reproach upon her, he put his hand to his brow, and went disconsolately from the room and out of the house.

Poor fellow ! she had made him ten years older than when, ten minutes before, he entered that room, all faith, and poetry, and love.

Slowly and disconsolately he dragged his heavy steps and a heavy heart home. His father followed, and entered his small apartment without ceremony. Nathan found his son sitting with his eyes fixed on the ground. In a few abrupt words he told him he knew all about his amorous folly, and had come up to cure it.

"It is cured," said Alexander ; "she has cured me herself."

"Then she is an honest woman," cried Nathan. "So now, since that nonsense is over, take my arm, and we will go down to Westminster."

"Yes, father."

They went to Westminster ; they entered a court of law, and were so fortunate as to hear an interesting trial. Counsel for the plaintiff was just opening a crim. con. case.

The advocate dwelt upon the sacred feelings outraged by the seducer, on the irremediable gap that had been made in a house, and in a human heart ; the pitiable doubt that had been cast over those sacred parental affections which were all that now remained to the bereaved husband. He painted the empty chamber, the vacant place by the hearth, and the father dagger-struck by little voices lisping, "Papa, where is mamma gone ?" and all that sort of thing. His speech was rich in topic and point, and as for emphasis, it was all emphasis. He concluded in this wise : "Such injuries as these can never be compensated by money ; it is ridiculous to talk of money where a man has been laid desolate, and, therefore, I hope, gentlemen of the jury, you will give my unfortunate client three thousand pounds damages at the very least !"

At each point the orator made, Nathan nudged Alexander, as if to say, "That is how you must do it some day."

As they returned homewards attorney asked poet how he had been charmed by Mr. Eitherside's eloquence.

"Eloquence?" said Alexander, waking from his reverie. "I heard no eloquence."

"No eloquence! why, he worked the defendant like a man beating a carpet."

Nathan recapitulated Mr. Eitherside's points.

"Well, father," was the languid reply, "this shows me that people who would speak about the heart should speak from the heart. I heard something like a terrier dog barking, that is all I remember."

"A terrier dog! one of the first counsel in the land; but there, you come to your dinner. I won't be in a passion with you, if I can help, because — you'll be better after dinner."

Nathan's satisfaction at his son's sudden cure was soon damped. Alexander was not better after dinner; to be sure, this might have been owing to his having eaten none; he could not eat, and never volunteered a word; only when spoken to three times, he shook himself and answered with a visible effort, and then nestled into silence again. The next and following days matters were worse. Spite of all Nathan could do to move him, he sank into a cold, listless melancholy. About five o'clock (play-time) he used to be very restless and nervous for a little while, and then relapse into stone. And now Nathan began to ask himself what the actress had done to his son during that short interview between them. He began greatly to doubt the wonderful cure, or rather to fear that the first poison had been attacked by a stronger in the way of antidote, which had left his son in worse case than before.

Hitherto he had thought it wisest to avoid the subject, and silently expel the boy's folly by taking him and shaking him, and keeping him from thinking of it. But now one evening, as he looked at Alexander's pallid, listless countenance, this anxiety got the better of his plan, and he could not help facing the obnoxious topic.

After a vain attempt or two to interest the poet in other matters, he suddenly burst out, "What is the matter, Alexander? What has she done to you now?"

Alexander winced.

"Tell me, my boy," said Nathan, more gently.

Alexander *éclata*.

"She has deceived me. She has robbed my heart of all its wealth. Oh! I would rather have gone on believing her all that is great and good, though inaccessible to me. But to find my divinity a mean heartless slattern. To have poured all my treasures away forever upon an unworthy object. O father, I do not grieve so much that she is worthless, but that I thought her worthy. To me she was the jewel of the earth. — I know her now for a vile counterfeit, and I have wasted my affections on this creature, and now I have none left for any worthy object; scarcely for my father. See my conduct to you all this week. Heaven forgive me — and you forgive me, sir. I feel I am no son to you. I am lost! I am lost!"

"Alexander, don't be a fool," roared Nathan, "get up off your knees, or I'll kee—kee—kick you into the fi—fire!" gulped he; "that is right—that's a dear boy: now tell me what has the poor lady done? I can't think she is such a very bad one."

"She has robbed herself and me of the tints with which I had invested her, and shown herself to me in her true colors."

"Why, you mustn't tell me she paints her face, without 'tis with cold water."

"Oh, no! not that, but off the stage she is a mean, vulgar, bad woman."

"I can't think that of her, Alexander."

"Father, I have no words to tell you her vulgarity, her avarice, her stupidity — as for her beauty, it is all paint and artifice: father, I saw her this day se'nnight in her own house; she is vulgar, and dirty, and almost ugly."

"Oh, you deceitful young rascal, you know she is beautiful as an angel!"

"Isn't she, sir! — ah! you have only seen her on the stage."

"I see her on the stage! What, do you tell me I go to the playhouse! I never was in a playhouse in my life."

"Then how do you know she is beautiful? Where have you seen her, if not on the stage?"

Mr. Oldworthy senior hesitated. He did not choose his son to know he had visited the play-actress, and enlisted her in his cause.

Alexander saw his hesitation, and misinterpreted it ludicrously.

"Ah, father," cried he, "do not be ashamed of it."

"I am not — ashamed of what?"

"Would I were worthy of all this affection!"

"What affection?"

"That you have for the unfortunate."

"I have no affection for the unfortunate, it's always their own fault."

"If you knew how I honor you for this, you would not deny or be ashamed of it."

"Of what? Are we talking riddles?"

"Do not attempt to disguise what gives you a fresh title to my gratitude — it was curiosity to see my destroyer drew you thither. Ah, it must have been the

day before yesterday. I remember you disappeared after dinner. Well, father," continued Alexander, with a sad, sweet, melancholy accent, "you saw her play 'Monimia' that night, and, having seen her, you can forgive my infatuation."

"No! I can't forgive your infatuation, obstinate toad! that will tell me I have been to the playhouse — to the devil's own shop-parlor that is."

"You have seen her — you call her beautiful; therefore it is clear you have seen her at the theatre, for at home she is anything but beautiful, or an angel."

"Alexander, you will put me in a passion; but I won't be put in a passion." So saying, the old gentleman, who was in a passion, marched slap out of the house into the moonlight, and cooled himself therein.

On his return he found his son sitting in a sort of collapse by the fire, and all his endeavors to draw him from brooding over his own misery proved unavailing. The next day he was worse, if possible; and when play-time had come and gone, and Nathan was in the middle of a long law-case that he was relating for his son's amusement, Alexander, who had not spoken for hours, quietly asked Nathan what he thought about suicide, and whether it was injudicious to die when hope was dead and life withered forever. Nathan gave a short, severe answer to this query; but it troubled him.

He began to be frightened: he consulted Bateman. Bateman was equally puzzled; but at last the latter hit upon an idea. "Go to the actress again," said he; "it seems she can do anything with him. She made him love her — she made him hate her; ask her to make him to do something between the two."

"Why, you old fool!" was the civil retort, "you are as mad as he is. No! she almost bewitched me, for as old as I am; and I won't go near her again."

But Alexander got worse and worse. He drooped like a tender flower. He had lost appetite and sleep; and without them the body soon gives way.

His grief was of the imagination. But the distinction muddle-heads draw between real and imaginary griefs is imaginary. Whatever robs a human unit of rest, nourishment, and life, is as real to him as anything but eternity is real.

The old men saw a subtle disorder creeping over the young man. It was incomprehensible to them; and after ridiculing it awhile, they began to be more frightened at it than if they had comprehended it.

At last, one morning, a new phase presented itself. A great desire for solitude consumed our poor poet. All human beings were distasteful to him, and, his mind being in a diseased state, Nathan and Timothy bored him like red-hot gimlets—the truth must be told. Well, this particular morning, they would not let him alone—and he so wanted just to be left in peace—and partly from nervousness, partly from irritation, partly from misery, the poet lost all self-command, and, I am sorry to say, cursed and swore and vowed he would kill himself; and called his friends his tormentors, and wept and raved and cursed the hour he was born. And at the end of this most unbecoming tirade he was for dashing out of the house, but his father caught him by the collar and whirled him back into his room, and locked him into it. Alexander fell into a chair and buried his face in his hands: presently he heard something that made him feel how selfish his grief had been. He heard a deep sigh just outside the door, and then a heavy step went down the stair.

“Father!” cried he, “forgive me! Oh, forgive me!”

It was too late. All who give a parent pain repent; but how often it is too late.

The poor old man was gone, as unhappy as his son, and with more solid reason. He went into the street without knowing what he should do or where he should go.

It happened at this moment that Bateman's advice came into his head. He was less disposed to scout it now.

"It can do no harm," thought he, "and I am quite at a loss. She has a good heart, I think, and at all events she seems to know how to work on him, and I don't. I'll risk it."

So, hanging his head, and with no very good-will, he slowly wended his way towards Mrs. Oldfield's house.

When Alexander left Mrs. Oldfield, that lady took off her vulgar cap and the old wig with which she had disguised her lovely head, and, throwing herself into a chair, laughed at the piece of comedy she had played off on our poor poet.

Her laugh, however, was not sincere; it soon died away into something more like a sigh.

The next morning there was no letter in verse, and she missed it. She had become used to them, and was vexed to think she had put an end to them. On returning from the theatre she looked from her carriage to see if he was standing as usual by the stage-door. No, he was not there; no more letters — no more Alexander. She felt sorry she had lost so genuine an admirer; and the moment the sense of his loss touched herself she began to pity him, and think what a shame it was to deceive him so.

"I could have liked him better than all the rest," said she.

But this lady's profession is one unfavorable to the growth of regrets, or of affection for any object not in sight. She had to rehearse from ten till one, then to

come home, then to lay out her clothes for the theatre, then to dine, then to study, then to go to the theatre, then to dress, then to act with all the intoxications of genius, light, multitude, and applause; then to undress, sup, etc., and all this time she was constantly flattered and courted by dozens of beaux and wits. Had she been capable of a deep attachment, it could not have monopolized her as Alexander's did him. However, she did thus much for our poor poet: when she found she had succeeded in banishing him she went into her tantrums, and snapped at and scratched everybody else that was kind to her. She also often invited Susan to speak of him, and after awhile snubbed her and forbade the topic.

To-day, then, as Mrs. Oldfield sat studying "The Rival Queens," suddenly she heard a sob, and there was Susan, with the tears quietly and without effort streaming from her eyes, like the water running through a lock gate. Susan had just returned from a walk.

"What have you done?" whined Susan. "I have just met him, and he said to me, 'Ah, madam!' he always calls me madam, and he has lost his beautiful color—he is miserable—and I am miserable."

"Well!" snapped Anne, "and am I not miserable too! why, Susan," cried she, for a glimmer of light burst on her, "surely you are not such a goose as to fancy yourself in love with my Alexander."

My Alexander—good! She has declined him for herself, but she will not let you have him any the more for *that*—other women!

"Your Alexander! No! I am too fond of my own. Here's your one's book," and Susan thrust a duodecimo towards her cousin.

"My one's book," said Mrs. Oldfield, with a mystified air.

"Yes! Robert says it belongs to the young gentleman

who saved you from the duchess's carriage; he picked it up after the battle."

Mrs. Oldfield opened the book with interest; judge her surprise when the first page discovered verses in Alexander's well-known hand: in the next page was a spirited drawing of Mrs. Oldfield as Sophonisba; under it was written, in gold letters, "Not one base word of Carthage on thy soul," a line the actress used to speak with such majesty and fire that the audience always burst into a round of applause. And so on, upon every page poetry or picture. The verses were more tender than those he had sent her by letter. The book was his secret heart!

It was Alexander, then, who had saved her — his love surrounded her. And how had all his devotion been repaid? She became restless — bit her lips; the book she held became a book in a mist, and she said to Susan, in bitter accents, "They had better not let the poor boy come near me again, or they will find I am a woman, in spite of my nasty blank verse and bombast. Oh! oh! oh!" and the tragedian whimpered a little, much as a housemaid whimpers; it was not at all like the "real tears" that had so affected Alexander.

On the fly-leaf of this little book was written: — "Alexander Oldworthy. Should I die — and I think I shall not live, for my love consumes me — I pray some good Christian to take this book to the great Mrs. Oldfield; it will tell her what I shall never dare to tell her: and if departed spirits are permitted to watch those they have loved, it is for her sake I shall revisit this earth, which, but for her, I should leave without regret."

"I am a miserable woman!" cried the dealer in fictitious grief. "*This is love!* I never was loved before, and mine must be the hand to stab him; they make me turn his goddess to a slut — his love to contempt; and

I do it, mad woman that I am ! for what ? to rob myself of the solace Heaven had sent to my vacant heart—of the only real treasure the earth contains ;” and she burst into a passion of tears.

At this Susan’s dried themselves ; the grief of the greater mind swallowed up her puny sorrow, as the river absorbs the brook that joins it. Anne frightened her, and at last she stole from the room in dismay. Her absence, however, was short ; she returned in about ten minutes, and announced a visitor.

“I will not see him !” said Mrs. Oldfield, almost fiercely, looking off the part she had begun to study.

“It is the rough gentleman !” said Susan.

“What ! Alexander’s father ? Admit him. He is come to thank me ; and well he may. Cruel wretches that we both are.”

Nathan entered, but with a face so rueful, that Mrs. Oldfield saw at once gratitude had not brought him there.

“What have you done, madam ? ” was his first word.

“Kept my word to you, like a fool,” was the answer ; “I hope you are come to reproach me—it would not be complete without that !”

Nathan had come with that intention, but he was now terror-struck, and afraid to do anything of the kind. He proceeded, however, in mournful tones to tell her that Alexander had fallen into a state of despondency and desperation, which had made him—the father—regret that more innocent madness he had hitherto been so anxious to cure.

“He says he will kill himself,” said Nathan. “And if he does, he will kill me : poor boy ! all his illusions are kicked head over heels ; so he says, however.”

“A good job, too !” said Mrs. Oldfield.

“How can you say a good job, when it will be a job for Bedlam ?”

"Bedlam!"

"Yes; he is mad!"

"What makes you think he is mad?"

"He says you are not beautiful! 'She has neither heart, grace, nor wit,' says he: in a word, he is insane. I reasoned calmly with him," continued the afflicted father, "I told him he was an idiot. But I am sorry to say, he answered my affectionate remonstrance with nonsense and curses, and a lot of words without head or tail to them: he is mad!"

"You cruel old man!" cried Mrs. Oldfield: "have you done nothing to soothe the poor child?"

"Oh! yes!" said the cruel old man, resenting the doubt cast upon his tenderness; "I shoved him into a room, and double-locked him in; and came straight to you for advice about him, you are so clever."

"So it seems!" said she; "I have made everybody unhappy—you, Alexander, and, most of all, myself." And tears began to well out of her lovely eyes.

"Oh, dear!—oh, dear!—oh, dear!—don't you vex yourself so, my lamb."

But the lamb, *alias* crocodile, insisted upon putting her head gracefully upon Nathan's shoulder, and crying meekly awhile. On this (a man's heart being merely a lump of sugar that melts when woman's eye lets fall a drop of warm water upon it) Nathan loved her: it was intended he should.

"I would give my right arm, if you would make him love you again; at all events a little—a very little indeed. Poor Alexander, he is a fool, a scatter-brain; and, for aught I know, a versifier; but he is my son. I have but him. If he goes mad or dies, his father will lie down and die too."

"Sir!" said the actress, with sudden cheerfulness, and drying her eyes with suspicious rapidity: "bring him

to me; and (patting him slyly on the arm) you shall see me make him love me more than ever — ten times more, if you approve, dear sir!”

“Here! he won’t come: he rails at you, you are his aversion. Oh, he is mad! my son is deprived of reason: this comes of those cursed rhymes.”

A pause ensued: Oldfield broke it. “I have it!” cried she; “he is an author: they are all alike! (What did she mean by that?) Speak to him of ‘Berenice.’”

“Whom am I to talk to him about?”

“Berenice!”

“What, is he after another woman now?”

“No — his tragedy.”

“His tragedy!”

“Ah, I forgot,” said she, coolly; “you are not in the secret; he composed it by stealth in your office.” She then seated herself at a side-table, and wrote a note with theatrical rapidity.

“Give him this,” said she. Receiving no answer, she looked up a little surprised, and there was Nathan apoplectic with indignation; his two cheeks, red as beetroot, were puffed out; paternal tenderness was in abeyance; finally he exploded in, “So, this was how my brief-paper went;” and marched off impetuously, throwing down a chair.

“Where are you going?” remonstrated his companion.

“He is an author,” was the reply; “he is no son of mine. I’ll unlock him and kick him into the wide world.”

“What, for consecrating your brief-paper to the Muse?”

“Yes; did you ever know a decent, respectable character write poetry?”

“Yes.”

"No; that you never did! Who, now?"

"David! he wrote Hebrew poetry — the Psalms; and very beautiful poetry, too."

Poor Nathan! he was like a bull, which in the middle of a gallant charge, receives a bullet in a vital part, and so pulls up, and looks mighty stupid for a moment ere he falls.

But Nathan did not fall; he glared reproach on Mrs. Oldfield for having said a thing, which, though it did not exactly admit of immediate confutation, was absurd as well as profane, thought he, and resolved to serve Alexander out for it: he told her as much. So then ensued a little piece of private theatricals. Mrs. Oldfield, clasping her hands together, began to go gracefully down on her knees an inch at a time (nothing but great practice enabled her to do it), and remind Nathan that he was a father; that his son's life was more precious than anything; that to be angry with the unhappy was cruel. "Save him, save him!"

Poor Nathan took all this stage business for an unpremeditated effusion of the heart, and with a tear in his eye, raised the queen of crocodiles, and, with a hideously amiable grin, "I'll forgive him!" said he; "to please you I'd forgive Old Nick."

With this virtuous resolve, and equivocal compliment, he vanished from the presence chamber, and hurried towards Alexander's retreat.

Oldfield retired hastily to her bedroom, and, having found "Berenice," ran hastily through it once more, and began to study a certain scene which she thought could be turned to her purpose. Having what is called a very quick study, she was soon mistress of the twenty or thirty lines. She then put on a splendid dress, appropriate (according to the ideas of the day) to an Eastern queen. That done, she gave herself to Statira, the part

she was to play upon this important evening ; but Susan observed a strange restlessness and emotion in her cousin.

"What is the matter, Anne ?" said she.

"It is too bad of these men," was the answer. "I ought to be all Statira to-day, and, instead of a tragedy queen they make me feel — like a human being. This will not do ; I cannot have my fictitious feelings, in which thousands are interested, endangered for such a trifle as my real ones ;" and, by a stern effort, she glued her eyes to her part, and was Statira.

Meantime Nathan had returned to Alexander, and, giving him Mrs. Oldfield's note, bade him instantly accompany him to her house.

Alexander had no sooner read the note than the color rushed into his pale face, and his eye brightened ; but, on reflection, he begged to be excused from going there. But his father, who had observed the above symptoms, which proved to him the power of this benevolent enchantress, would take no denial ; so they returned together to her house. It was all very well the first part of the road, but, at sight of the house, poor Alexander was seized with a combination of feelings, that made it impossible for him to proceed.

"I feel faint, father."

"Lean on me."

"Pray excuse me — I will go back to Coventry with you — to the world's end — but don't take me to that house."

"Come along, ye soft-hearted milksop."

"Well, then, you must assist me, for my limbs fail me at the idea."

"Mine shall help you," — and he put an arm under his son's shoulder, and hoisted him along in an undeniable manner — and so, in a few minutes more the attorney

was to be seen half drawing, half dragging the poet into the abode of the siren, which he had first entered breathing fire and fury against play-actors to drag his son out of. It was, indeed, a curious reversal of sentiments in a brace of bosoms.

"No, father, no!" sighed Alexander, as his father pulled him into her salon.

"But I tell you it is for your tragedy," remonstrated the parchment to the paper hero. "It's business," said he, reproachfully. "Now 'tis writ, let us sell it—to greater fools than ourselves, if we can find them." The tone in which he uttered the last sentence conveyed no very sanguine hope on his part of a purchaser.

"Why did you bring me here, dear father?" sighed the *desillusionné*. "It was here my idol descended from her pedestal. O reality! you are not worth the pain of living—the toil of breathing."

"Poor boy!" thought Nathan, "he is in a bad way—the toil of breathing—well, I never!—your tragedy, lad, your tragedy," insinuated he, biting his lips not to be in a rage.

"Ah!" said Alexander, perking up, "it is the last tie that holds me to life—she says in this note that she took it for another, and that mine has merit."

"No doubt! no doubt!" said the other, humoring the absurdity—"how came the Muse (that is the wench's name, I believe) into my office?"

"She used ever to come in," began he in rapt tones, "when you went out," he added, mighty dryly.

Alexander's next casual observation was to this effect—that once he had a soul, but that now his lyre was broken.

"That's soon mended," said his rough comforter; "well, since your *liar* is cracked"—

"I said broken, father—it is broken, and for me the business of life is ended."

"Well," said the parent, whose good-humor at this crisis appears to have been inexhaustible, "since your liar is broken — smashed, I hope — and your business done, or near it, turn to amusement a bit, my poor lad."

Alexander looked at him, surveyed him from top to toe.

"Amusement!" whinnied the inconsolable one, with a ghastly chuckle — "amusement! Where can broken hearts find amusement?"

"IN THE LAW!" roared Nathan, with cheerful, hopeful, healthy tone and look. "I do," said he; then, seeing bitter incredulity on the poet, he explained, *sotto voce*, "'tisn't as if we were clients, ye fool."

"Never," shrieked Alexander.

Poor Nathan had commanded his wrath till now, but this energetic "Never" set him in a blaze.

"Never, you young scamp," shouted he, "but — but — don't put me in a passion — when I tell ye the excise-man's daughter won't have you on any other terms."

"And I won't have her, on any terms — she is a woman."

"Well, she is on the road to it — she is a girl, and a very fine one, and you are to make her a woman — and she will make a man of you, I hope."

"No more women for me," objected the poet. He then confided to an impatient parent his future plan of existence — it was simple, very simple; he purposed to live in a garret in London, hating and hated; so this brought matters to a head.

"I have been too good to you! you are mad! and, by virtue of parental authority, I seize your body, young man."

But the body had legs, and, for once, an attorney failed to effect a seizure.

He slipped under his father's arm, and getting a table between them gave vent to his despair.

"Since you are without pity," cried he, "I am lost — farewell forever!" and he rushed to the door which opened at that instant.

The father uttered a deprecatory cry, which died off into a semi-quaver of admiration — for, at this moment, a lady of dazzling beauty, arrayed in a glorious robe that swept the ground, crossed the poet's path, before he could reach the door, and, with a calm but queen-like gesture, rooted him to the spot.

She uttered but one word, but that word, as she spoke it, seemed capable of stilling the waves of the sea: —

"Hold!"

No louder than you and I speak, reader, but irresistibly. Such majesty and composure came from her, upon them, with this simple monosyllable. They stood spellbound. Alexander thought no more of flight; nor Nathan of pursuit.

At last, by one of those inspirations that convey truth more surely than human calculation is apt to, the poet cried out, "This is herself, the other was a personation!"

Berenice took no notice of this exclamation. She continued, with calm majesty, —

" 'Listen to a queen, whose steadfast will
In chains is royal, in Rome unconquer'd still;
O'er my bowed head though waves of sorrow roll,
I still retain the empire of my soul.' "

Her two hearers stood spellbound. And then did Alexander taste the greatest pleasure earth affords — to be a poet, and to love a great actress, and to hear the magic lips he loved speak his own verse. Love, taste, and vanity were all gratified at once. With what rich flesh and blood she clothed his shadowy creation; the darling of his brain was little more than a skeleton; it was reserved for the darling of his heart to complete

the creation. And then his words, oh! what a majesty and glory they took from her heavenly tongue. They were words no more — they were thunderbolts of speech, and sparks of audible soul. He wondered at himself and them.

Oldfield spoke his line, —

“O'er my bowed head though waves of sorrow roll,”

with a grand though plaintive swell, like the sea itself — it was really wonderful.

Alexander had no conception he or any man had ever written so grand a line as “O'er my bowed head though waves of sorrow roll.” He was in heaven. A moment like this is beyond the lot of earth, and compensates the smart that is apt to be in store, all in good time, for the poet that loves a great actress, that is to say, a creature with the tongue of an angel, the principles of a weasel, and the passions of a fish!

“And have those lips graced words of mine?” gasped Alexander. “My verses, father!”

“His verses! no!” said Nathan, addressing the actress; “can he write like the sound of a trumpet?”

“Yes! Alexander, I like your play, particularly a scene where this poor queen sacrifices her love to the barbarous prejudices of her captors.”

“My favorite scene! my favorite scene! Father, she likes my favorite scene!”

“Gentlemen, be so good as to lend yourselves to the situation a moment — here, Susan!” In came Susan, her eyes very red; she had been employed realizing that Alexander was not to be hers.

“You, sir!” continued Mrs. Oldfield, addressing Nathan, “are the consul — the inexorable father.”

“Oh! am I?”

"Yes! you must stand there — on that flower — like a marble pillar — deaf to all my entreaties. You are about to curse your son."

"I curse my boy? Never!"

"Father, for heaven's sake, do what she bids you."

"Dress the scene," continued she — "farther off, Susan — this is tragedy, don't huddle together as they do in farce."

"But I am in such trouble, Anne."

"Of course you are — you are Tibulla — you are jealous. You spy all our looks, catch all our words. Now, mind your *business*. The stage is mine. I speak to my Tiberias." She kicked her train adroitly out of the way, and flowed like a wave on a calm day towards Tiberias, who stood entranced, almost staggering under the weight of his own words, as they rolled over him: —

"Obey the mandate of unfeeling Rome;
Make camps your hearth, the battlefield your home;
Fly vain delights, fight for a glorious name,
Forget that e'er we met, and live for Fame."

(In this last line she began to falter a little.)

"Alas! I whom lost kingdoms could not move
Am mistress of myself no more. I love!
I love you, yet we part: — my race proscribe,
My royal hand disdain this barbarous tribe.
This diadem that all the nations prize,
Is an unholy thing in Roman eyes."

She did not merely speak, she acted these lines. With what a world of dignity and pathos she said "my royal hand disdain," and in speaking of the "diadem," she slowly raised both hands, one somewhat higher than the other, and pointed to her coronet, for one instant. The pose would have been invaluable to sculptor or painter.

"We are in the wrong," began Nathan, soothingly, for the queen had slightly indicated him as one of "the barbarous tribe." — "A lady like you! — The Romans are fools-asses-dolts-and-beasts," cried Nathan, running the four substantives into one.

"Hush! father!" cried the author, reproachfully.

" 'And you, young maid, kill not my wounded heart;
Ah! bid me not from my Tiberias part.' "

(Tears seemed to choke her utterance.)

"Oh, no! cousin," drawled out Susan, "sooner than you should die of grief — it *is* a blow, but I give him up" —

"Hold your tongue, Susan, you put me out."

"Now it is too melting," whined Nathan, "leave off — there, do ye leave off, — it is too melting."

"Isn't it?" said Alexander, radiant. "Go on! go on! You whose dry eye — you whose dry eye, Mrs. Oldfield."

Mrs. Oldfield turned full on Nathan, and sinking her voice into a deeper key, she drove the following lines slowly and surely through and through his poor, unre-sisting, buttery heart: —

" 'You whose dry eye looks down on all our tears,
Pity yourself, — ah! for yourself have fears.
Alone upon the earth some bitter day,
You'll call your son your trembling steps to stay.
Old man! regret, remorse, will come too late;
In vain you'll pity then our sad, sad fate.' "

"But, my good sir, you don't bear me out by your dumb play, — you are to be the unrelenting sire."

"Now, how ca-ca-ca-can I, when you make me blub-ber?" gulped out he "whose dry eye," etc.

"And me!" whined Susan.

"Aha!" cried Alexander, with a hilarious shout, "I've made them cry with my verses!"

A smile, an arch smile, wreathed the tragic queen's countenance.

Alexander caught it, and not being yet come to his full conceit, pulled himself up short: "No," cried he, "no! it was you who conquered them with my weak weapon; you, whose face is spirit, and whose voice is music. Enchantress" —

Here, Alexander, who was gracefully inclining towards the charmer, received a sudden push from the excited Nathan, and fell plump on his knees as intended.

"Speak again," cried he, "for you are my queen. I love you. What is to be my fate?"

"Alexander," said Anne, fluttering as she had never fluttered before: "you have so many titles to my esteem. Oh! no, that won't do. See, sir, he does it almost as well as I do.

'Live, for I love you;

My life is his who saved that life from harm;

This pledge attests the valor of your arm. Here, look!"

And she returned him his pocket-book.

"His pocket-book!" said Nathan, his eyes glazed with wonder. "Why, how did his tragedy come in his pocket-book; I mean, his pocket-book in his tragedy; which is the true part, and which is the lie? Oh! dear, the dog has made his father cry, and now I have begun, I don't like to leave off, somehow." Then, before his several queries could be answered, he continued, "So this is play acting, and it's a sin! Well, then — I like it." And he dried his eyes, and cast a look of brilliant satisfaction on all the company.

He was then silent, but Alexander saw him the next minute making signals to him to put more fire and determination into his amorous proposals.

Before he could execute these instructions, a clock on the chimney-piece struck three.

The actress started, and literally bundled father and son out of the house, for in those days plays began at five o'clock.

Mrs. Oldfield, however, invited them to sup with her, conditionally; if she was not defeated in "The Rival Queens." "If I am," said she, "it will be your interest to keep out of my way; for, of course, I shall attribute it to the interruptions and distractions of this morning."

She said this with an arch, and, at the same time, rather wicked look, and Alexander's face burned in a moment.

"Oh," cried he, "I should be miserable for life."

"Should you?" said Anne.

"You know I must."

"Well, then (and a single gleam of lightning shot from her eyes), I must not be defeated."

At five o'clock the theatre was packed to the ceiling, and the curtain rose upon "The Rival Queens," about which play much nonsense has been talked. It is true, there is bombast in it, and one or two speeches that smack of Bedlam; but there is not more bombast than in other plays of the epoch, and there is ten times as much fire. The play has also some excellent turns of language and some great strokes of nature; in particular the representation of two different natures agitated to the utmost by the same passion, jealousy, is full of genius.

"The Rival Queens" is a play for the stage, not the closet. Its author was a great reader, and the actors who had the benefit of his reading charmed the public in all the parts, but in process of time actors arose who had not that advantage, and "Alexander the Great"

became too much for them. They could not carry off his smoke or burn with his fire. The female characters, however, retained their popularity for many years after the death of the author, and of Betterton, the first Alexander. They are the two most equal female characters that exist in one tragedy. Slight preference is commonly given by actors to the part of Roxana, but when Mrs. Bracegirdle selected that part, Mrs. Oldfield took Statira with perfect complacency.

The theatre was full—the audience in an unusual state of excitement.

The early part of the first act received but little attention. At length Statira glided on the scene. She was greeted with considerable applause; in answer to which she did not duck and grin, according to rule, but sweeping a rapid yet dignified courtesy, she barely indicated her acknowledgments, remaining Statira.

“Give me a knife, a draught of poison, flames!
Swell, heart! break, break, thou stubborn thing!”

Her predecessors had always been violent in this scene. Mrs. Oldfield made distress its prominent sentiment. The critics thought her too quiet, but she stole upon the hearts of the audience, and enlisted their sympathy on her side before the close of the act.

Mrs. Bracegirdle, who stood at the wing during the scene, turned round to her toady, and said, shrugging her shoulders, “Oh, if that is all the lady can do!”

In the third act Mrs. Bracegirdle made her *entrée* with great spirit, speaking, as she came on, the line—

“Oh, you have ruined me! I shall be mad!”

She was received with great applause, on which she instantly dropped Roxana, and became Mrs. B., all wreathed in smiles; the applause being ended, she re-

turned to Roxana as quickly as it is possible to do after such a deviation. She played the scene with immense spirit and fire, and the applause was much greater than Statira had obtained in the first act.

Applause is the actor's test of success.

The two queens now came into collision, and their dialogue is so dramatic that I hope I may be excused for quoting it, with all its faults.

Roxana. Madam, I hope you will a queen forgive :
Roxana weeps to see Statira grieve ;
How noble is the brave resolve you make,
To quit the world for Alexander's sake !
Vast is your mind, you dare thus greatly die,
And yield the king to one so mean as I ;
'Tis a revenge will make the victor smart,
And much I fear your death will break his heart.

Statira. You counterfeit, I fear, and know too well
How much your eyes all beauties else excel :
Roxana, who though not a princess born,
In chains could make the mighty victor mourn.
Forgetting power when wine had made him warm,
And senseless, yet even then you knew to charm :
Preserve him by those arts that cannot fail,
While I the loss of what I love bewail.

Roxana. I hope your majesty will give me leave
To wait you to the grove, where you would grieve ;
Where, like the turtle, you the loss will moan
Of that dear mate, and murmur all alone.

Statira. No, proud triumpher o'er my falling state,
Thou shalt not stay to fill me with my fate ;
Go to the conquest which your wiles may boast,
And tell the world you left Statira lost.
Go seize my faithless Alexander's hand,
Both hand and heart were once at my command ;
Grasp his lov'd neck, die on his fragrant breast,
Love him like me whose love can't be express'd,
He must be happy, and you more than blest ;

While I in darkness hide me from the day,
That with my mind I may his form survey,
And think so long, till I think life away.

Roxana. No, sickly virtue, no,
Thou shalt not think, nor thy love's loss bemoan,
Nor shall past pleasures through thy fancy run.
That were to make thee blest as I can be;
But thy no-thought I must, I will decree;
As thus, I'll torture thee till thou art mad,
And then no thought to purpose can be had.

Statira. How frail, how cowardly is woman's mind!
We shriek at thunder, dread the rustling wind,
And glitt'ring swords the brightest eyes will blind;
Yet when strong jealousy inflames the soul,
The weak will roar, and calms to tempests roll.
Rival, take heed, and tempt me not too far;
My blood may boil, and blushes show a war.

Roxana. When you retire to your romantic cell,
I'll make thy solitary mansion hell!
Thou shalt not rest by day, nor sleep by night,
But still, Roxana shall thy spirit fright;
Wanton in dreams if thou dar'st dream of bliss,
Thy roving ghost may think to steal a kiss;
But when to his sought bed thy wand'ring air
Shall for the happiness it wished repair,
How will it groan to find thy rival there?
How ghastly wilt thou look when thou shalt see,
Through the drawn curtains that great man and me,
Wearied with laughing joys that shot to the soul,
While thou shalt grinning stand, and gnash thy teeth, and
howl!

Statira. O barb'rous rage! my tears I cannot keep,
But my full eyes in spite of me will weep.

Roxana. The king and I in various pictures drawn,
Clasping each other, shaded o'er with lawn,
Shall be the daily presents I will send,
To help thy sorrow to her journey's end;
And when we hear at last thy hour draws nigh,
My Alexander, my dear love, and I,

Will come and hasten on thy lingering fates,
And smile and kiss thy soul out through the grates.

Statira. 'Tis well, I thank thee ; thou hast waked a rage,
Whose boiling now no temper can assuage ;
I meet thy tides of jealousy with more,
Dare thee to duel, and dash thee o'er and o'er.

Roxana. What would you dare ?

Statira. Whatever you dare do,
My warring thoughts the bloodiest tracks pursue ;
I am by love a fury made, like you ;
Kill or be killed, thus acted by despair.

Roxana. Sure the disdain'd Statira does not dare ?

Statira. Yes, tow'ring proud Roxana, but I dare.

Roxana. I tow'r indeed o'er thee ;

Like a fair wood, the shade of kings I stand,
While thou, sick weed, dost but infest the land.

Statira. No, like an ivy I will curl thee round,
Thy sapless trunk of all its pride confound,
Then dry and wither'd, bend thee to the ground.
What Sisygambis' threats, objected fears,
My sister's sighs, and Alexander's tears,
Could not effect, thy rival rage has done ;
My soul, whose start at breach of oaths begun,
Shall to thy ruin violated run.

I'll see the king in spite of all I swore,
Tho' cursed, that thou may'st never see him more.

In this female duel Statira appeared to great advantage. She exhibited the more feminine character of the two. The marked variety of sentiment she threw into each speech, contrasted favorably with the other's somewhat vixenish monotony ; and every now and then she gave out volcanic flashes of great power, all the more effective for the artful reserve she had hitherto made of her physical resources. The effect was electrical when she, the tender woman, suddenly wheeled upon her opponent with the words "Rival, take heed," etc. And now came the climax ; now it was that Mrs. Bracegirdle paid

for her temporary success. She had gone to the end of her tether long ago, but her antagonist had been working on the great principle of art — Climax. She now put forth the strength she had economized; at each speech she rose and swelled higher, and higher, and higher. Her frame dilated, her voice thundered, her eyes lightened, and she swept the audience with her in the hurricane of her passion. There was a moment's dead silence, and then the whole theatre burst into acclamations, which were renewed again and again ere the play was suffered to proceed. At the close of the scene Statira had overwhelmed Roxana; and, as here she had electrified the audience, so in the concluding passage of the play she melted them to tears — the piteous anguish of her regret at being separated by death from her lover.

“ ‘ What, must I lose my life, my lord. forever? ’ ”

And then her pitying tenderness for his sorrow; and then her prayer to him to live; and, last, that exquisite touch of woman's love, more angelic than man's —

“ ‘ Spare Roxana's life;
'Twas love of you that caused her give me death; ’ ”

and her death with no thought but love, love, love, upon her lips; all this was rendered so tenderly and so divinely, that no heart was untouched, and few eyes were dry now in the crowded theatre. Statira died; the other figures remained upon the stage, but to the spectators the play was over; and when the curtain fell there was but one cry — “ Oldfield ! ” “ Oldfield ! ”

In those days people conceived opinions of their own in matters dramatic, and expressed them then and there. *Roma locuta est*, and Nance Oldfield walked into her dressing-room the queen of the English stage.

Two figures in the pit had watched this singular battle with thrilling interest. Alexander sympathized alternately with the actress and the queen. Nathan, after hanging his head most sheepishly for the first five minutes, yielded wholly to the illusion of the stage, and was "transported out of this ignorant present" altogether; to him Roxana and Statira were *bonâ fide* queens, women, and rivals. The Oldworthys were seated in critic's row; and after awhile Nathan's enthusiasm and excitement disturbed old gentlemen who came to judge two actresses, not to drink poetry all alive O.

His neighbors proposed to eject Nathan; the said Nathan on this gave them a catalogue of actions, any one of which, he said, would re-establish his constitutional rights and give him his remedy in the shape of damages: he wound up with letting them know he was an attorney-at-law. On this they abandoned the idea of meddling with him as hastily as boys drop the baked half-pence in a scramble provided by their philanthropical seniors. So now Mrs. Oldfield was queen of the stage, and Alexander had access to her as her admirer, and Nathan had a long private talk with her, and then with some misgivings went down to Coventry.

A story ought to end with a marriage: ought it not? Well, this one does not, because there are reasons that compel the author to tell the truth. The poet did not marry the actress and beget tragedies and comedies. Love does not always end in marriage, even behind the scenes of a theatre. But it led to a result, the value of which my old readers know, and my young ones will learn—it led to a very tender and life-long friendship. And, oh! how few out of the great aggregate of love affairs lead to so high, or so good, or so affectionate a permanency as is a tender friendship.

One afternoon Mrs. Oldfield wrote rather a long letter thus addressed in the fashion of the day:—

TO MR. NATHAN OLDWORTHY,
Attorney at-Law,
In the Town of Coventry,
At his house there in the Market street.
This, with all despatch.

Nathan read it, and said, "God forgive me for thinking ill of any people because of their business," and his eyes filled.

The letter described to Nathan an interview the actress had with Alexander. That interview (several months after our tale) was a long, and at some moments a distressing one, especially to poor Alexander: but it had been long meditated, and was firmly carried out; in that interview this generous woman conferred one of the greatest benefactions on Alexander one human being can hope to confer on another. She persuaded a dramatic author to turn attorney. He was very reluctant then, and very grateful afterwards. These two were never to one another as though all had never been. They were friends as long as they were on earth together. This was not so very long. Alexander lived to eighty-six; but the great Oldfield died at forty-seven. Whilst she lived, she always consulted her Alexander in all difficulties. One day she sent for him: and he came sadly to her bedside: it was to make her will. He was sadder than she was. She died. She lay in state, like a royal queen; and noblemen and gentlemen vied to hold her pall as they took her to the home she had earned in Westminster Abbey. Alexander, faithful to the last, carried out all her last requests: and he tried, poor soul, to rescue her fame from the cruel fate that awaits the great artists of the scene—oblivion. He

wrote her epitaph. It is first-rate of its kind; and prime Latin for once in a way:—

Hic juxta requiescit
Tot inter Poetarum laudata nomina

ANNA OLDFIELD.

Nec ipsa minore laude digna.
Nunquam ingenium idem ad partes
Diversissimas nobilius fuit:
Ita tamen ut ad singulas
Non facta sed nata esse videretur.

In Tragædiis

Formæ splendor, oris dignitas, incessus majestas,
Tantâ vocis suavitate temperabantur
Ut nemo esset tam agrestis tam durus spectator
Quin in admirationem totus reperetur.

In Comœdia autem

Tanta vis, tam venusta hilaritas,
Tam curiosa felicitas,
Ut neque sufficerent spectando oculi,
Neque plaudendo manus.

There, brother, I have done what I can for your sweetheart, and I have reprinted your epitaph after one hundred years.

But neither you nor I, nor all our pens, can fight against the laws that rule the arts. Each of the great arts fails in something, is unapproachably great in others. The great artists of the scene are paid in cash; they cannot draw bills at fifty years' date.

They are meteors that blaze in the world's eye, and vanish.

We are farthing candles that cast a gleam all around four yards square for hours and hours.

Alexander lived a life of business, honest, honorable, and graceful, too; for the true poetic feeling is ineradicable—it colors a man's life—is not colored by it.

And when he had reached a great old age, it befell that Alexander's sight grew dim, and his spirit was weary of the great city, and his memory grew weak, and he forgot parchments, and dates, and reports, and he began to remember as though it was yesterday the pleasant fields, where he had played among the lambs and the buttercups in the morning of his days. And the old man said calmly, "*Vixi!* Therefore now I will go down, and see once more those pleasant fields; and I will sit in the sun a little while; and then I will lie beside my father in the old churchyard." And he did so. It is near a hundred years ago now.

So Anne Oldfield sleeps in Westminster Abbey, near the poets whose thoughts took treble glory from her while she adorned the world; and Alexander Oldworthy lies humbly beneath the shadow of the great old lofty spire in the town of Coventry.

Requiescat in pace!

"And all Christian souls, I pray Heaven."

THE JILT, AND OTHER STORIES.

A HERO AND A MARTYR.

UPON the second day of October, 1856, the *Glasgow Times* told the world a moving story.

A little boy was drowning in the Clyde. There were a score of people on the bank; but they only groaned, and glared, and fluttered at the child's screams and struggles; not one had both the courage and the skill to plunge in and rescue him.

But presently came an elderly man who was a peerless swimmer and diver, and had saved more than forty lives in that very river.

Alas! he was now stone blind; a little girl, his granddaughter, was leading him by the hand.

Yet to him his blindness seemed no obstacle. "Let me to him! let me to him!" he cried, "I'll save him yet!"

But, in the general dismay and agitation, his appeal was unheeded at first. Then he screamed out in generous fury, "Ye daft fules, a mon disna soom wi' his een; just fling me in the water, and cry me a to him, and ye'll see."

His prayer would have been granted, but his granddaughter, with a girl's affection and unreasoning fears, clung round his knees, and screamed, "Na, na, ye wadna, — ye wadna!"

This caused a hesitation, when there was no longer a

moment to lose. The boy sank for the last time. A deep groan from the spectators told the sad end, and the poor blind hero went home flinging his arms about in despair, and crying like a child; for, as he afterwards said, in telling the lamentable tale, "It was a laddie flung away; clean flung away."

The chronicler went on to enumerate the gallant exploits of this very James Lambert, before he lost his sight; and the whole story set me thinking. I began to weigh the vulgar griefs of men against James Lambert's high distress. I taxed myself, and dissected things that had made me rage, or grieve; now they seemed small and selfish.

From that my mind went into books, and I fell to comparing the feats and the tears of James Lambert with the feats and tears of heroes, whom history has embalmed, or poetry canonized.

Strange to say, it was not my living contemporary, but the famous figures of poetry and history, that paled a little in this new crucible. I often detected some drawback to their valor, and a taint of egotism in their grief. This made me suspect that poetry, like its readers, may have been dazzled by the glare of armor and the blare of trumpets, and left heroic men unsung, who best deserved a bard. For, look below the surface — unsung Lambert's was the highest courage; it was solitary courage, and no trumpets to stir it; no armor, no joint enthusiasm; often no spectators. Summer and winter he plunged into the Clyde, and saved men and women, with his bare body, and at great peril to his life: for the best swimmer is a dead man if a drowning person clutches him and cripples him. And what was his reward on earth? For his benevolent courage he was stricken blind, through so many immersions of his heated body in icy water.

Was not this a poetic calamity, and a fit theme for tenderest verse ?

Being thus afflicted, for his virtue, he heard a fellow-creature drowning. He was potent as ever in the water, but impotent on land ; and they would not help him into the water ; and so a young life was flung away, that he could have saved ; and he went home flinging his arms about in agony, and weeping tears that angels might be proud to dry with loving wing. Alas ! and is it so ? The eyes, that can no longer see, can weep.

A noble, rare, unselfish, and most poetical distress, though told in the plain prose of a journal. It made me desire to see this James Lambert, and hear his tale from his own lips, and give him my poor sympathy.

But, unfortunately, I am a procrastinator. Of course I can do unadvisable things expeditiously ; but, when a wise or good thing is to be done, "*nonum prematur in annum*" is my motto. So, for ten mortal years, and more, I was always going — going — going — to visit James Lambert.

At last, after many years, being in Selkirkshire, I shook off "the thief of time," and went into Glasgow to see this man, a hero in his youth, a martyr in old age.

But I had lived long enough to observe that, when you seek a man who was alive and elderly twelve years ago, you find he has been dead from four to seven. So, on the road to Glasgow, I blamed myself bitterly for my besetting sin, and actually said to myself very earnestly, —

“ — from this moment

The very firstlings of my heart shall be

The firstlings of my hand.”

That was fine ; only, not to deceive you, I had often repeated this high resolve, with great fervor and sincerity, and then gone on procrastinating.

In Glasgow I made strict inquiries after James Lambert; I asked the landlord, and all the waiters; went to every tradesman I knew in the city. Not one soul had ever heard of him, nor of his exploits. This confirmed my fear that he had gone to a better world, whilst I was busy postponing here below. However, my tardy blood was up at last; so I took a cab, and drove to the police chambers, and asked for the chief. The request I had to make was unusual; therefore I prefaced the matter after this fashion — “Sir, most people come here to ask you to find out some malefactor. I come hunting an honest man and a man of great merit, one James Lambert who saved many lives in the Clyde, years ago. I have come from England to find him, and I can hear nothing of him, alive or dead. If you will assist me with your machinery, I shall be truly obliged to you.”

Now they say the Scotch are not so quick to take a new idea as the English. That may be; but they are also not so quick to reject one. An English chief constable would probably have said at once, “That is quite out of our line; you should go to the parochial clergy;” but after twenty minutes’ discussion would have relented, and given me every assistance: the Scottish chief, on the contrary, though manifestly taken aback, thought before he spoke; thought, without disguise, for full thirty seconds. “Well, sirr,” said he, very slowly, “I see — no — objection — to thaat.” Then he turned to a tube and said, in a hollow voice, “Send me a detective.”

This done, he took down my name, and address in Glasgow, and what I knew about James Lambert.

One’s idea of a detective is — a keen, lean man, with little glittering eyes — a human weasel. The door opened, and in walked a model of strength and youthful beauty, that made me stare. He was about twenty-two years old, at least six feet four in height, and the

breadth and, above all, the depth of his chest, incredible. Until I saw John Heenan strip, and reveal his bulging back and breast, and every inch of his satin skin mapped with muscles, I took for granted the old sculptors had exaggerated, and carved ideal demigods, not real men. Nude Heenan showed me they had not exaggerated, but selected; and this detective confirmed the proof; for he was a much finer man than Heenan, yet not a bit fleshy: and, instead of a prizefighter's features, a comely, manly, blooming face, and a high, smooth forehead, white as snow itself. I know no lady in the South with a forehead more white and delicate.

This Hercules-Apollo — his Scotch name I have forgotten — stood at the door, and, drawing himself up, saluted his chief respectfully.

"——," said the chief, "this is Mr. Redd, fr' England. He is looking for an old man named Lambert, that saved many lives in the Clyde some years ago. Ye'll take means to find him — here's his description — and ye'll report to Mr. Redd at his hotel. Ye understand now; *he's to be found* — if he is alive."

The detective saluted again, but made no reply. He took my address, and the particulars, and went to work directly, as a matter of course. I thanked the chief heartily, and retired to my hotel.

About nine in the evening, Detective Hercules-Apollo called on me. All he had *detected* was a brave man, called John Lambert, that had saved lives out of a burning ship in the port of Greenock. I declined John Lambert — with thanks.

Having now no serious hope of finding James Lambert alive, I took the goods the gods provided, and interviewed Hercules-Apollo, since he was to hand. I questioned him, and he told me he was often employed in captures.

"Well," said I, "you are the man for it. You don't often meet your match, eh?"

He blushed a little, and smiled, but it did not make him bumptious, as it might a small man, say a lifeguardsman, or drayman. He said, "I assure you, sirr, I need it all, and whiles, mair." He then pointed out to me a window in the Trongate, exactly opposite the room we were in. "Yon's just a nest o' theeves," said he: "they wark wi' decoys, sirr, a wife wi' a tale o' woe, or a lass wi' a bonny face, and the like. The other night a gentleman put his hand through the window, and cried 'Thieves!' So I ran up the stair. The door was lockit, ye may be sure. I just pit my fut till't" —

"And it flew up the chimney?"

"Ha! ha! No so far as that, sirr. Aweel, I thought to find maybe two or three of them; but there were nigh a dizen o' the warst characters in Glasgow. However, I was in for't, ye ken; so I was in the middle of them before they had time to think, and collared twa old offenders. 'I'll tak this handful,' says I, 'and I'll come bock for the lave' *b*: marched 'em oot, and the gentleman at my heels. He was glad to wend clear, and so was I. My hairt beat hard that time, I shall assure ye; but I didna let the vagabonds see *thaat*, ye ken." He intimated that it was all gas for any one man to pretend he could master half a dozen, if they were resolute. "Na—we beer the law in our hairts, and they beer guilt in theirs. That's what makes the odds, sirr."

After a conversation, of which this is only a fragment, we returned to James Lambert, and he told me he expected news, good or bad, by break of day, for he had fifty policemen questioning on their beats, in the likeliest parts of the city. "Ah," said I, "but I am afraid those beats are all above ground; now my poor hero is underground."

I went to bed with this conviction; and having hitherto blamed myself, which is an unnatural trick, I now looked round for somebody else to blame, which is customary and wholesome; and herein my smattering of the British drama stood my friend; I snarled, and said — out of Sir Peter — “He has died on purpose to vex me.”

I heard no more till half-past one next day, and then my gigantic and beautiful detective called. This time he had a huge pocket-book — enormous — in a word, such a pocket-book as he a man. He opened it, and took out an old newspaper with an account of James Lambert, and also a small pamphlet. I ran my eye over them.

“That will be the man, sirr?”

“Yes.”

“Aweel, then we’ve got him,” said he, quietly.

“What! got him alive?”

“Ou ay; he is in vara good health. He’s not an old man, sirr. He will not be mair than saxty.”

“Have you seen him with your own eyes?” said I, still half incredulous.

“Ye may be sure o’ thaat, sirr. I wadna come here till I had spoken him. He stays at No. 36 Little Street, Calton.”

I thought Calton was some other town, but he told me it was only a suburb of Glasgow, and all the cabmen knew it. Then I thanked him for his zeal and ability, and stood a sovereign, which he received with a grateful smile, but no abatement of his manly dignity; and I took a fly that moment, and drove to Little Street, Calton.

For some reason No. 36 was hard to find, and I got out of the fly to explore. I found the population in a flutter, and it was plain by the swift gathering of

juveniles, and their saucer eyes, that this was the first triumphal car had entered that miserable street. However, if there was amazement, there was civility; and they vied with each other in directing me to James Lambert. I mounted a stair, as directed, and knocked at a door. A woman's voice said, "Come in," and I entered the room. There was but one.

On my right hand as I stood at the door, and occupying nearly one-third of the room, was a long large wooden machine for spinning cotton; the upper part bristled with wooden quills polished by use. Behind it the bed in a recess. Immediately on my left was a table with things on it, covered with a linen cloth. Exactly opposite me the fireplace. On *my* right hand of it the window, but in an embrasure.

An old woman sat before the window, a young woman sat all in a heap the other side of the fire; and in front of the fire stood a gray-headed man, with well-cut features, evidently blind. He was erect as a dart, and stood before his own fire in an easy and gentleman-like attitude, which does not, as a rule, belong to workingmen; they generally slouch a bit when not at work.

"Does Mr. Lambert live here?" said I, for form.

He replied civilly, "I am James Lambert. What is your wull with me?"

"Mr. Lambert, I have come from some distance to have a talk with you—about your exploits in saving lives."

"Aweel, sirr, I'll be very happy to hae a crack wi' ye. Wife, give the *gentleman* a chair."

When I was seated, he said, "We are in a litter the day; but ye'll excuse it."

I saw no litter, and did not know what he meant. Before he could explain, a young man called for him, no doubt by appointment; and Lambert begged me to

excuse him for a moment; he had a weekly pension, and they would not pay it after three o'clock; but it was not far, and he would return directly. He then left me seated between the two women. I looked hard at the young woman. She never moved, and seemed quite stupid or stupefied. I looked at the table on her side of the room, and wondered what was under the linen cloth. There seemed to be a prominence or two, such as objects of unequal height would cause, and I fancied it must be the best teapot, and other china, covered to keep off the dust.

The young woman was repellent, so I turned round to the old one, and praised her husband.

"Ay," said she, "he has been a curious mon in his time — and mony a great faitour^c he did — and mony a good suit he destroyed that *I* had to pay for."

This last sentence being uttered earnestly, and its predecessor apathetically, coupled with the stress on the "I," gave me the measure of the woman's mind. However, I tried her again. "Did you see any of his exploits?"

"Na, na; I was aye minding my wark at hame. I saw leetle o' his carryings on."

I said no more; but remembered Palissy's wife, and other egotistical mediocres; and turned to the young woman: but she seemed unconscious of my voice or my presence.

From this impenetrable I turned, in despair, to the covered table; tried to see below the cover with my eagle eye, and had just settled positively it was the china tea-service, when, to my great relief, James Lambert returned, and conversation took the place of idle speculation.

We soon came to an understanding, and I asked him to give me some details, and to begin at the beginning.

"Aweel, sirr," said he, "the first case ever I had was a baker—they ca't a case ye ken the noo; aw thing is a case—an awfu' fat mon he was. I was aboot fourteen or fifteen then, but a gey guid soomer^d. Aweel, sirr, me and Rab Rankin, and John Murdoch, and a hantle mair lads, went doon to the bathing-place, an' we were divairting oorselves in the water, when the baker strips and comes out on the deal. Noo ye'll understond there was shallow water and deep, and the deep was at the far eend o' the deal. They ca' it 'the Dominie's Hole,' fra a schulemaister wha was drooned there a hundre' years agone. So this baker comes oot to the vera eend o' the deal, and dives in heed first, as if Clyde belanged to him—ha, ha, ha! He dizna come up for awhile, and I said to the other callants^e, 'Hech, sir, ye'll see a bonny diver.' Presently up he comes, paanting and baashing, and flinging his arrms; then doon he goes again with baith een glowering. 'Mairey on us,' cries ane, 'the mon's drooning.' However, he comes up again, baashing and spluttering. I was ready for him, and just swam forereicht him, and took him by th' arm. That will let ye see what a senseless cauf I was. I suld hae gone and flung him ae eend of my gallows, or my naepkin^f, and towed him in; but, instead of that, he gat haud o' me and grippit me tight to his breest, and took me doon with him. Noo, tell me, sir—y' are a soomer yoursel?"

I said, "Yes."

"What was our lives worth, the pair? Him a twanty stane mon, and me a laddy?"

"Not much, indeed, unless you could slip away from him."

"Ay, but I could na; he huggit me till him. Aweel, sirr, if he was wild, I was desperate. I flang my heed back and gat my knees up to his breest, and after my

knees my feet, and I gied the awfu'est spang with my feet against his breest, and I got clear, a' but the skin 'o my forefinger, that I left in his hond. I raised to the surface and called to the boys to mak' a chain. I was afeared to dive for him. But by Gude's maircy he came up yance mair, just to tak' leave o' Scoetland. I got ahint him and gave him a sair crack on the heed, drove him forud, followed him up wi' a push, and then the lads took hands and won to him, and pulled him to the deal, and I soomed ashore, and I hadna been there a minute when I swooned reicht away."

"How was that?" I asked.

"I think it was partly the pain, but maistly faint-hairedness at sight o' my finger a-streaming wi' bluid, and the skin away. When I came to mysel' the baker had put on his claes and gaed awa."

"What, without a word to his preserver?"

"Ay."

"Didn't he give you anything?"

"Deil a bawbee. But there was two gentlemen saw the affair, and gied me fifteen shellin'. I went hame sucking my sair finger; and my mither gied me an aw-fu' hiding for spoiling my clothes. She took me by the lug g, and made me cry 'murrder.'"

"Fine, sympathetic creatures, the women in these parts," said I; *circumferens acriter oculos*, as my friend Livy hath it, and withering a female right and left, as playful men shoot partridges. Unfortunately, neither of them observed I had withered her: the hero's narrative and my basilisk glances were alike unheeded.

"And on the impassive ice the lightnings play."—*Pope*.

James Lambert, duly questioned, then related how a personal friend of his had been seized with cramp in the middle of the Clyde. "For, sirr," said he, "the Clyde

is a deedly water, by reason of its hot and cold currents, and sand-holes and all."

His friend had sunk for the last time; James Lambert dived for him, and brought him up from the bottom, and took him ashore.

"And, sirr, maybe ye wadna think it; but the resoolt was — I lost my freend."

"What do you mean?" said I, staring.

"He just avoided me after that. He came to see me twarree *h* times, too; but I obsairved he wasna easy till he was away; and bymby I saw nae mair o' the lad." This he said without passion, and apparently only to discharge his conscience, as a faithful narrator of real events, and men as they are in life, not books. But I, who am no hero, boiled.

I took time to digest this human pill, and then questioned him. But I omit two cases — to use his own words — as they had no particular feature.

"The next case, sir, was an old wumman; ye ken the wives come on Glasgow Green to wash. Well, this auld wife had gone oot at 'the three stanes' to dip her stoop i' the water, and overbalanced herself and gone in he'd first, and the stream carried her oot. The cry got up, 'there's a wumman droonin.' I was a lang way off, but I heerd it, and ran down and into the water after her, clothes and all. She was floating, sirr, but her heed was doon, and her feet up. I never saw the like in a' my life. I soomed up to her, and lifted her puir auld gray heed out o' the water — a rale riverend face she had — and broucht her ashore on my arm as quiet as a lamb; and laid her doon."

"Was she insensible?"

"Not atehgither, I think, but nigh hand it, just scared like oot o' her senses, puir saul. Vera sune she began to tremble all over and greet sair. I turned my bock,

no' to greet mysel', and went aside and ridded my claes. Aweel, sirr, the first word she spoke was to speer for me. She cries out, quite sudden, 'Whaur's the mon that gat me oot; for Gude's sake, whaur is he?' Sae the folk pushit me, and I behooved to come forrüd, and mak' my confession. 'Wife,' says I, 'I'm the mon.' So she looks me all over. 'The Lorrd protect ye,' she cried. 'The Lorrd bless ye!—I'm a puir auld body,' says she, "I hae naething but my washing-bay i'. But come ye wi' me; and I'll pit it away, and get ye twarree shellin' for saving me fra deeth.'"

"Hech, sirr, I felt it awfu' keen; it was just her livelihood, ye ken, her washing-bay; and she'd pit it i' pawn for me. 'Puir auld body,' says I, 'and is that a' ye hae?' And I just clappit a shellin' in her hand, and I tell't her I needed naething; I'd a gude wife, and a gude wage. I was warking at Somerville's mill over the water. 'And,' says I, 'if ye wait for me Saturday afternoons, when I lift my wage, I'll whiles hae a shellin' for ye.'"

"And did she?"

"Na, na," said he; then, thoughtfully, "She was ower puir to gie, and ower decent to take."

All our other provincial dialects are harsh and ugly; but the Scotch is guttural on the consonants, and on the vowels divinely melodious: I wish I could convey the exquisite melody of James Lambert's voice in speaking these words, "Puir — auld — body! an' is thaat a' ye hae?"

The story itself, and the brave, tender hero's tones were so manly, yet so sweet, that they brought water into my eyes; and I thought this tale at least must touch some chord even in the dull, domestic heart. But no; I looked at the young woman, and she sat all of a heap, still wrapped in herself, dull, stupid, and gloomy

beyond description, and the narrative, far from touching her, never even reached her. That was evident, somehow. Thought I to myself, "Oh, but y'arr a dour wife, y' arr."

Perhaps you will be incredulous at my thinking in Scotch; but the truth is, I am little better than a chameleon; I take the local color willy nilly. After a day in France I begin to think in French; in Scotland, Scotch. I think in bad French and bad Scotch — very; but that is a flimsy detail; the broad fact remains. So I dubbed her a "dour *j* wife:" and really I felt wrath that such pearls of true narrative should be poured out before young Apathy and ancient Mediocrity.

Of Mediocrity there is no cure; but there is of Apathy, at least in Scotland. That cure is — whiskey. When whiskey will not thaw a Scotch body at all,

"O then be bold to say Bassanio's — *dead*."

So I beckoned a dirty but attentive imp, that gleamed, all eyes, in a dark corner, and sent him out for a great deal of whiskey; and postponed my inquiries till after the thaw.

But, before the imp could return with Apathy's cure, several footsteps were heard on the stairs, and three or four men entered, all in good black suits. A few words of subdued greeting passed, and then they removed the white linen cloth from what I, with my eagle eye and love of precision, had inventoried as the best tea-service.

It was the body of a little girl, lying in her little coffin. The lid was not yet on. She looked like frozen wax.

After the first chilling surprise, I cast my eye on the young woman. She never moved nor looked, but she shivered by the fire when the men touched the coffin behind her.

She was the dead child's mother. Even I — in spite of my eagle eye — could see that now.

I whispered to James Lambert, "I have intruded on you at a sad time."

"Ye haena intruded at all," said he out loud. Then he told me, before them all, what made it worse was that the father had gone away and not been seen these three days.

"Ay, but," said Mrs. Lambert, "ye mauna let the gentleman think he is ane that drinks. Na, he is a real quiet, sober, decent man."

"He is thaat," said the bereaved mother, speaking for the first time, but in a crushed and dogged way.

"I'm no' exackly denying that," said James, cautiously. "But whaur is he — *at the present time?*"

It was evident that this quiet, sober, decent man, upon the death of his daughter, had gone away on the fuddle, and left his bereaved wife to bury the child how she could.

Such are the dire realities of life, especially among the poor.

With what different eyes I looked now on the poor creature, bereaved mother, and deserted wife, whose deep and numbing agony I had taken for sullen apathy — with my eagle eye.

And now came in an undertaker, and the coffin-lid was to be screwed on. Before this was done, all the men, myself included, took a last look at her who was taken away so early from the troubles of the world.

"Ay, sir," said the undertaker to me, "it is just clay going to the dust;" and never was a truer word nor more pictorial. That clay seemed never to have lived.

The lid was soon screwed down, and then, to my surprise, the undertaker delivered a prayer. Now that was the business of the minister: and besides, the under-

taker had the reddest nose I ever saw. For all that he delivered a grave, feeling, and appropriate prayer, and then the deceased was carried out for interment, and I was left with James Lambert, his daughter, and his wife. I asked James Lambert, would not the minister meet them at the grave.

"Na," said he, "there's nae minister intill't. The wives daur na tell him, or he'd be speering, 'Why is na the gude man here?' and then he'd get a pooblic rebuke. Whisper, sirr. Hae ye no absairved that the women-folk aye screens a blackguard?"

"Yes," whispered I; "especially when they suffer by him."

So the poor wife let her child be prayed over and buried by a layman, sooner than expose her husband to the censure of the church.

All this made my bowels yearn, and, for the first time, I addressed myself directly to her. I said, "My poor woman, nobody can console a mother that has lost a child: that is beyond the power of man. But, if it is a part of your trouble that you are left without help, and perhaps hard put to it for expenses, I can be of some little use to you in that." Then I pulled out two or three of those deplorable old rags — Scotch one-pound notes, by means of which the national malady is perpetuated and passes from hand to hand.

I don't know whether it was the stale words or the old rags, or both; but the poor woman burst out crying and sobbing with almost terrible violence.

We did what we could for her, and tried to get her to swallow a few drops of whiskey; but she put her hand up and turned away from it.

The quick-eared old man found this out somehow, and explained her to her face. "She can take a drap as weel as ony body: but noo, she blames it for her mon

being away." Then, rather roughly to his wife, "Hets, ye fule, let the lass greet. What'n harm will that dee her?"

Soon after this the two women exchanged one of their signals, and went out together—I think to pay the undertaker; and such is the decent pride of the Scotch character, that to be able to do this was probably a drop of comfort in the bitter cup of their affliction.

When they were gone, the old man's expressive features brightened a little, and he drew his stool nearer me, with a certain genial alacrity. There are book-makers who would not let you know that, madam, lest you should turn from their hero with aversion; but, when I deal with fact, I am on my oath. At all events, understand him before you turn from him. You see the present very clearly, the past through a haze; but this man, being blind, could not see the present at all, and saw the past clearer than you do; for he was compelled to live in it. He had never seen the grandchild he had lost; an unfamiliar fragment of this generation had gone away to the grave, a man of his own generation sat beside him, and led him back to the men and things he knew by sight and by deed.

"Well, Mr. Lambert—now tell me."

"Aweel, sirr, ye've heerd o' the callant they wadna let me save—hech, sirr, yon was a wean wastit^k—noo I'll mak' ye the joodge whether I could na hae saved that ane, and twarree mair. There's a beck they ca' 'the Plumb' rins doon fra' the horse-brae into the Clyde near Stockwell Brigg. The bairns were aye for sporting in the beck, because it was shallow by ordinar, and ye'd see them the color o' vilets, and no' hauf sae sweet, wi' the dye that ran i' the beck. Aweel, ae day there was a band o' them there; and a high spate^l hed come doon and catched them, and the resoolt was I saw ane o' th'

assembly in the Clyde. I had warned the neer-do-weels, ye ken, mony's the time. By good-luck, I was na far away, and went in for him and took him by the ear. 'C'way, ye little deevil,' says I. I had na made three strokes, when I'm caught round the neck wi' another callan."

"Where on earth did he spring from?"

"I dinna ken. I was attending to number ane, when number twa poppit up, just to tak' leave o' Glasgwo. I tell't them to stick in to me, and carried the pair ashore. Directly, there's a skirl on the bank, and up comes number three, far ahint me in the Clyde, and sinks before I can win ^m to him. Dives for this one, and has a wark to find him at the bottom. Brings him ashore, in a kind o' a dwam; but I had nae fear for his life, he hadna been doon lang: my lord had a deal mair mischief to do, ye ken. By the same token he came to vera sune; and d'ye ken the first word he said to me?"

"No."

"Nay, but guess."

"I cannot."

"He said, 'Dinna tell my feyther!' ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! 'Lordsake, man, dinna tell my feyther!' ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"

I never saw a man more tickled, by a straw, than James Lambert was at this. By contemplating him I was enabled, in the course of time, to lose my own gravity; for his whole face was puckered with mirth, and every inch of it seemed to laugh.

"But," said he, "wad you believe it, some officious pairson tell't his feyther, in spite o' us baith. He was just a laboring man. He called on me, and thankit me vara hairtily, and gied me a refreshment. And I thought mair o't than I hae thought o' a hantle siller on the like occasions."

After one or two savings that would have gained a man a medal in the South, but go for nothing in this man's career, and would dilute the more colored incidents, James Lambert prefaced a curious story by letting me into his mind. "By this time, sirr," said he, "I was aye prowling about day and night for vectims."

"Tell the truth, James. You had the pride of an artist. You wanted them to fall in, that you might pull them out, and show your dexterity."

"Dinna mak' me waur than I am, ha! ha! ha! Nay, but ye ken, in those days, folk was na sae acquainted in sooming, and accidents was mair common; and sae, if such a thing was to be, I wad like to be there and save 'em. Ech, the sweetness o't! — the sweetness o't!

"I raised every morning between three and four, and took a walk; it was a kind o' my natur, and the river was aye the first place I ran tae. Aweel, ae morning, before 'twas well light, I heerd high words, and there was a lass fleichting ⁿ on a lad, and chairging him wi' beein' her ruin: and presently she runs away skirling, and flings hersel' into the river. The lad he just turns on his heel and walks away."

I expressed my surprise and horror — no matter in what terms.

He replied, loftily, "My dear sirr, d'ye ken this? there have been men in the name o' men, that were little mair than broom besoms."

I acquiesced.

"'Twas na for sport neither. The lass knew the water, and ran straicht to the deepest pairt, opposite Nelson's Monument: her claes buoyed her up, and I got her out easy enouch. She was na ashore a moment, when in she flees again, the daft hizzy. Noo the water maistly cools thir sort o' lasses, and reconciles them to terree firmee. But she was distrackit, she was just a woman that wanted

to die. So I went in again, and lectured her a' the time I was pulling her oot. 'Hae ye a quarrel wi' Him that made ye, ye daft cummer?' o says I; and I held her on the bank itsel'; but if I was strong in the water, she was stronger on land wi' her daftness, and she flung me off, and in again. 'Vara weel, my leddy,' says I. Sae — d'ye ken what I did noo?"

"No."

"I just drowned her. I pit her heed under water, and keepit there till I made her taste the bitterness o' dethe, for her gude, ye ken. Hech, sirr, but it sickened her o' yon game. She brought up a quart o' Clyde, and then she lay and rolled a bit, and pu'd the grass, and then she sat up quite as a lamb; and I stood sentinel over her leddyship, and my claes a-drippin'. By this time a wheen folk cam' aboot to see, and doesna the lad, that was wi' her, step forruid and complain to me. 'Ye'd little to do to interfere,' says he; 'she was wi' me; she was na wi' you.' — 'What,' says I, 'd'ye begroodge the lass her life?' — 'Not I,' says he; 'but y' had no need to meddle; what's your business?' So I gied him his answer. Says I, 'You have taen her character, and turned her on the mairey of the warld, and noo it's a' your vexation that ye could na' be rid of her in the Clyde. But she shall outlive you, ye blackguard,' says I, 'please Gude.' So then he challenged me to fight. But as I mad ready to take off my coat, a fine lad steps forruid, and lays his hand on my arm. 'Ye're no fit for him,' says he; 'an' ye've done your wark,' says he, 'and this is mines.' So at it they went, and t'other stood up and fought for about five minutes. But oh, he napped it. My lad just hashed him. Gied him twa black een, and at the hinder end laid him sprawlin' and smothered i' bluid."

"But the woman?"

"She was na a woman. She was but a lassie, about nineteen."

"Little fool! and thought she was ruined for life — when all her life was before her."

"Ye may say that, sirr: why, that very year wasna she married on a decent tradesman? I often saw her after she was married; but she wadna speak to me. She couldna look me straught i' the face. She'd say 'Gude morning,' though — when she couldna get by me."

"Ungrateful little brute!"

"Na, na; it was na ingratitude ava; it was just shame. Aweel, she needna run fra' me noo; for I canna see her, nor ony of those I hae saved."

This made me gulp a bit, and, when I had done, I said, "She measured you by her small self. She would have been sure to blab, in such a case, so she thought you would."

"Aweel then," said he, "she was mistaen; for I maun tell ye that some mischief-maker let on something or other about it to her man, and he was uneasy, and came and asked me if 'twas true I had taken his wife out o' the water. 'Ay,' said I, 'her and twarree mair.' — 'What had she to do i' the water?' says he. 'That's her business,' says I, 'mine was to tak' her oot.' He questioned me had she been drinking. 'Like eneuch,' says I, 'but I couldna say.' He questioned me, and questioned me; but I pit the collar on, ye ken. I behooved to clear the wife a' I could. I didna lee neither; but I was afflickit wi' a sooden obleevion o' sma' parteeculars, haw! haw! I dinna think muckle o' yon carle. He had a rare gude wife; they a' said so, and whaur was the sense o' him diving into her past life, to stir the mud?"

Passing over an easy job or two, and a few melancholy cases in which he had dived and groped the river, and restored dead bodies to their friends, I come now to a passage, which but for its truth I should hesitate to

relate exactly as he told it me; but, if I were to yield to squeamishness and slur it, a chapter of human nature, revealed to me, would by me be meanly carried to my grave and hidden from the scholars of other ages and nations.

Thus, then, it was: James Lambert was bathing in the Clyde one evening at the hour when it was allowed at that epoch.

Suddenly, Mrs. Cooper, that kept the Society's house, cried to him over the window, "Rin, Jamie Lambert, there is a laddie in the water."

Up ran James Lambert, but the boy had sunk. A bystander directed him to the place; but it is not so easy to mark the exact spot where a body has disappeared in the water; and James Lambert dived twice, and came up without the child. He dived a third time, and groped along the bottom. He was down so long that the cry got up he was drowned too. Others scouted the idea. James Lambert drown! They had known him cross the Clyde, under the water, from bank to bank. Some time having elapsed since the first alarm, people had poured across the green, and down the banks, and there was quite a crowd there murmuring and gazing, when up came James Lambert, panting, with the child in his arms.

There was a roar of exultation at the sight, but James Lambert did not hear it, and did not see the crowd. (Take note of that fact.) His whole soul was in the lovely boy, that lay white and inanimate in his arms. He ran into the house, uttering cries of concern.

"But when I got him in the hoose, he opens ae eye on me — like a bonny blue bead it was. Eh! I was happy; I was happy. I gied the bonny bairn a kiss and hands him to the wife, and orders her to the fire wi' him. Then I'm going oot, when a' of a soodden I find I haena

a steek on me, and twa hundred folk about the door. Wad ye believe it, *wi' the great excitement I never knew I was nakit*, till I saw the folk, and bethought me. I rins back again, and at the stair-foot, there's a bundle o' linen. I was na lang happing mysel', I can tell ye, and oot I comes as bold as brass, in the wife's apron and a muckle sheet. The sight o' me made the lasses scairt and skirl; for I was like a corp just poppit oot o' the grave. I went for my clothes, and — they were away. My bluid gat up at that, and I chackit them sair. 'Hech,' says I, 'ye maun be a cauld-haired set o' thieves,' says I, 'to tak' my very claes, when I was doing a mon's pairt.' Bymby I sees a young leddy in a silk gown, wagging on me", and she points to a hedge near by. So I went, and there were my claes. She hed put them aside for me, ye ken, and keepit her ee on them. Wasna that thouchtful o' her noo?"

"It was, indeed."

"Aweel, sirr, I got my things on at the hedge, an' tied up the wife's bundle, and cam' forrüd: and by this time the folk was dispaired like. But the same young leddy was walking to and fra, with her een doon, reflecting like. She wagged on me, and I came to her. So she askit me who I was, and I tell't her I was a cotton-spinner, and they caed me James Lambert. So she lookit at me full, and says she, 'James, are ye married?' — 'Oh, yes, ma'am,' says I, 'this three years.' So she lookit me all over, in a vara curious way; and she says saftly, 'James — it is — a — great — pity — yere married — for yere a vara — gallant — man.' So ye see, sirr, I could hae had a young leddy — for her ee tell't me mair nor her words — if I had na had the wife. But then I'd no hae had the wife. So it comes a' to the same thing."

I stared at him with surprise, for to me it did not

seem quite the same thing to marry high sympathy, swift intelligence, and plenty of money, and to marry poverty plus grovelling mediocrity. However, it was not for me to satirize conjugal affection and its amiable delusions. But I proposed the young lady's health, and we drank it cordially.

By this time I conclude I have so spoiled the readers of James Lambert, that they will care for no passage of his extraordinary career that does not offer some new feature. So I go from water to the double peril of ice and water at the freezing point.

"It was a hard winter; and I had chairge o' the gentlemen belonging to the skating club. So I had to go to Hugginfield Loch. But I was clean wastit there. I was armed wi' ladders an' ropes, and corks. Mon, ony fule can stand and fling gear till a drooning body. And I gat an awfu' affront intil the bargain; they castit in my teeth that I was partial, and saved the rich afore the poor. Noo I let naeboddy droon, but my bargain was with the club to save them *first*; so I behooved to keep to the contract. Aweel then, I did nae execution worth speaking o'; the thing I'm coming tae was at the bend of the Clyde, they ca' 'the peat bog.' A number was skating on the river, and the ice began to heave an' shake wi' the high tide. So I chased all the boys aff wi' my belt, and warned the men: but some folk winna be warned by me. The ice breaks under a laboring man, and in he goes, and the tide sucked him under in a moment. I ran to the place as fast as I could, and under the ice after him. Aweel, I soomed, and soomed, and did na catch him. I soomed, and soomed, ay, hoping to find him, till I had nae chance to come back alive if I did na turn. But, just as I turned, my feet struck him. Then my hairt got up again, and I grippit him, and I dragged him back wi' me, and soomed and soomed for my ain life the noo,

as weel as his. Eh, mon, I was amaist gane. But I wadna lose him. 'Twas baith live, or baith dee. I'm just givin' in, when I see the light o' the hole, and mak' for't, and get him oot and on to the ice, and dizna it keep breaking direckly with the pair o' us, and sae we go floonderin' and smashing, till we are helpit ashore. Noo I'll tell ye a farce. I'm haulding the chiel prisoner by the collar, and shaking t'other neifs at them a'. Ye ken I wanted to fleicht on them, for saying I riskit myself mair for the rich than the puir. But a' I could say was, 'Wow — wow — wow;' the brethe wadna come bock to my body. And while I was 'wow — wow — wowin' at them, and gripin' my coptive like a molly-factor, dizna he turn roond and thank me in a brief discoorse vara ceevil. Eh, mon, I glowered at him; I loosed him, an' rolled away backards to glower at him. He could hae repeated his catecheesm, and I could only baash an' blather. The man was a better man than me; for he had been langer in. Oh, I declared that on the bank, sune as ever I could speak."

I come now to the crowning feat of this philanthropic and adventurous life; and I doubt my power to describe it. I halt before it, like one that feels weak, and a mountain to climb; for such a feat, I believe, was never done in the water by mortal man, nor ever will again while earth shall last.

James Lambert worked in Somerville's mill. Like most of the hands, he must cross the water to get home. For that purpose, a small ferry-boat was provided; it lay at a little quay near the mill. One Andrew had charge of it ashore, and used to shove it off with a lever, and receive it on its return. He often let more people go into it than Lambert thought safe, and Lambert had remonstrated, and had even said, "Ye'll hae an accident some day that ye'll rue but ance, and that will be a' your

life." Andrew, in reply, told him to mind his own business.

Well, one evening James Lambert wanted to get away in the first boat-load. This was somehow connected with his having bought a new hat: perhaps he wished to avoid the crowd of workpeople—here I am not very clear. However, he watched the great wheel, and the moment it began to waver, previous to stopping, he ran for his hat, and darted down the stairs. But, as he worked in an upper story, full a dozen got into the boat before him. He told Andrew to put off, but Andrew would not till the boat should be full; and soon it was crammed. James Lambert then said it was a shame of him to let so many on board. This angered the man, and, when the boat was so crowded that her gunwale was not far above water, he shoved her violently off into the tideway, and said words which, if he has not prayed God to forgive them in this world, will perhaps hang heavy round his neck in the next.

"To hell—ye beggars!" he cried.

This rough launching made the overladen boat wobble. The women got frightened, and before the boat had gone twenty yards she upset in dark, icy water, ten feet deep.

It was night.

"Before the boat coupit^t at thegither, they a' flew to me that could: for they a' kenned me. I' the water, them that hadna a haud o' me, had a haud o' them that had a haud o' me, and they carried me doon like leed."

Now it is an old saying, and a true one, that "After-wit is everybody's wit." Were I to relate at once what James Lambert accomplished, hundreds would imagine they could have done the same. To correct that self-deception, and make men appreciate this hero correctly, I shall stop here, and entreat my readers, for the instruction of their own minds, to lay down this narra-

tive and shut their eyes, and ask themselves how it was possible for mortal man to escape drowning himself, and to save those who were drowning him. You have seen that it cost him the skin of his finger to get clear of a single baker. Here he was clutched and pinned by at least four desperate drowning creatures, strong as lions in their wild despair, and the weight of twelve people more hanging on to those that clutched him, so that the united weight of them all carried down the strong swimmer, like a statue in a sack.

“Sirr, when yeve twa feet i’ the grave, your mind warks hard. I didna struggle, for it was nae mair use than to wrastle wi’ a kirk. I just strauchtened myself oot like a corp^u, and let them tak’ me doon to the bottom o’ the Clyde; and there I stood upright, an’ waited; for I kenned the puir sauls would droon afore me, and I saw just a wee wee chance to save them yet. Ye shall understand, sirr, that when folk are drooning, they dinna settle doon till the water fills their lungs and drives the air oot. At first they waver up and doon at sairtain intervals. Aweel, sirr, I waited for that, on the grund. I was the only ane grunded, ye’ll obsairve. A slight upward movement commenced. I took advantage, and gied a vi’lent spang wi’ my feet against the bottom, and, wi’ me choosing my time, up we a’ came. My arms were grippit; but I could strike oot wi’ my feet, and, before ever we reached the surface, I lashed oot like a deevil, for the quay. Aweel, sirr, wi’ all I could do, we didna wend abune a yard, or maybe a yard an a hauf, and doon they carried me like leed. I strauchtened myself as we sank, and I grunded. The lave were a’ roond me like a fon^v. I bides my time, and, when they are inclining upward, I strikes fra the grund; an’ this time, mair slanting towards the quay. That helpit us, and in a dozen vi’lent strokes we maybe

gained twa yards this time. Then doon like leed. Plays the same game again, up, and doon again. And noo, sirr, there was something that turned sair against us; but then there was something for us to bollance it. It was against us that they had all swallowed their pint o' water by this time, and were na sae buoyant: it was for us that the water was shallower noo, maybe not mair than twa feet ower heed. Noo this twa feet wad droon us as weel as twanty; but wi' nae mair nor twa feet water abune us, I could spring up fra the grun by mere force, for the grun gies ye an awfu' poower for a foot or twa. Sae noo I'm nae suner doon than up again, and still creeping for the quay, and the water aye a wee bit shallower. The next news is, I gat sair spent, and that was bad: but, to bollance that, some folk on the quay gat rapes and boat-hooks, and pickit off ane or twa that was the nearest: and now ilka time I cam' up, they pickit ane off, and that lightened my burden; and bymby I drave a couple into shallow water mysel' wi' my feet. When I was in seven fut water mysel', and fewer folk hauding me doon, I got to be maister, and shovit ane, and pu'd anither in, till we landed the whole saxteen or seventeen. But my wark was na done, for I kenned there were mair in the river. I saw the last o' my ain band safe, then oot into the Clyde, wherever I heerd cries, and sune I fand twa lasses skirling, takes 'em by their lang hair, and tows them to the quay in a minute. Just as I'm landing thir *w* twa, I hear a cry in the vara middle o' the river, and in I splash. It was a strapping lass — they caed her Elizabeth Whitelaw. 'C'way, ye lang daftie,' says I, and begins to tow her. Lo an' behold! I'm grippit wi' a man under the water. It was her sweethairt. She was hauding him doon. The hizzy was a'reicht, but she was drooning the lad: pairs these *x* twa lovers — for their gude — and taks

'em ashore, one in each hand. Aweel, sirr, I saved just ane mair, and then I plunged in again, and sairched ; but thir was nae mair to be seen noo : three puir lasses were drooned : but I did na ken that at the time. And noo I'll tell ye a farce. I'm seized wi' a faintness, and maks for the shore. But I gat weaker, and dazed like, and the lights o' Glasgow begins to flecker afore my een : and thinks I, 'I'll no see *ye* again ; I'm done this time.' It was all I could do for the bare life, to drift to the hinder part of the quay. I hadna the power to draw mysel' oot. I just grippit the quay, and sobbit. The folk were a' busy with them I had saved ; nane of them noticed me, and I would ha' been drooned that nicht : — but wha d'ye think saved me that had saved sae mony ? — an auld decrepit man : haw, haw, haw ! He had a hookit stick, and gied me the handle, and towed me along the quay into shallow water, and I gat oot, wi' his help, and swooned deed away. I'm tauld I lay there negleckit awhile ; but they fand me at last, and then I had fifty nurses for ane."

Have I exaggerated ? Does history record any other example of a man being clutched by a great number of drowning people, and carried to the bottom, and saving them all in the lump, and then dashing in and saving the outsiders in detail ?

By way of illustration let the reader imagine an umbrella-frame, and only four or five curved whalebones attached to the top part of the upright : now fasten several other curved whalebones, high up, to each of those four or five curves. Now plunge the whole frame into water till the upright touches the ground. Not one of the sixteen curved pieces will touch the ground. But, in the water, if a person, male or female, clings to a fixed upright, that person's body floats up, more or less ; at all events, it inclines towards the horizontal.

Now James Lambert, by artificially straightening his body, made himself the stick of that human umbrella, or the upright post they all clung to directly or indirectly, and so were kept floating in a curve, instead of sinking to the bottom. This enabled him, but only by patiently and artfully watching the fluctuations up and down of those floating bodies, to spring at the nick of time from the hard ground, and carry them all to the surface for a few seconds. The rest is detail, and his own narrative makes it clear. But see what intellectual and moral qualities are here combined. Genius is often without courage; courage is generally without genius, and so indeed is bare skill; and, in desperate danger, how often has genius lost its head, and blundered like an idiot; how often has courage lacked invention, and relied on precedent, that did not fit the novel danger, and so led it to death. But this man, even as his body touched the water, was all cool courage and swift inventive genius. He did not repeat himself as mere skill does. Hugged in the water by a single man — the baker — he hit, with prompt invention, on the one way to save both lives; he used the baker's own chest as a fulcrum, and so tore himself free. But clutched by a dozen, and more, he never attempted to get free at all, but straightened and stiffened himself into an upright post, and used the ground as his fulcrum, to save himself and those who were drowning themselves and him.

I come, now, to the sad ending of all these glorious deeds.

James Lambert was up the river working, but at what business I forget. An engineer fell into the water, and sank for the last time, before James could get to the place.

Following the direction of persons on the bank, he flung himself from a bridge, and dived for the man.

But the others had not marked the place precisely, and when, after repeated efforts, he brought the man to land, life was gone forever. To use his own words, "It was a dear jump. He lost his life, and I lost my sight."

It was winter, and he was perspiring freely when he jumped into the icy water.

Very soon after, a great dazzling seized him, followed by darkness. It cleared after a time, and he saw again. But the same thing occurred at intervals; and, by degrees, the attacks came oftener, and remained longer, until at last the darkness settled down, and the light fled forever.

Think of it. This twenty years he can no longer see the "Dominie's Hole," nor "the three stanes," nor "the peat bog," nor "the dead-house," nor the Clyde itself, where every bend is the scene of some great good feat he did. More than fourscore eyes he rescued from the darkness of the grave; yet unjust fate and dire calamity have not left him one poor orb to see the blessed day and the faces of those he has saved.

Now turn back to the story repeated from the *Glasgow Times*, and surely you will say that it was a rare, and noble, and poetic distress, and worthy to be sung by some great poet.

I am no poet, and cannot adorn so strong a tale; therefore I have aimed at that which all honest men can attain, if they will but take trouble; viz., the exact truth. I travelled to see him. I stayed in Glasgow many days to know him. I took him down to the Clyde, and verified every spot, and got him to tell me each principal incident over again, at its own site, and I noted down his very words, as well as I could.

The next thing was to rescue his features from oblivion. I asked him to meet me at the photographer's.

He did so, but, horrible to relate, dressed as all Scotchmen dress on Sundays.

"James," said I, severely, "was it in this clerical suit you saved so many lives?"

"No likely," said he; "except yon carle that was bathing o' the sabba' day. Mon, I was for coming in my auld claes that I wrought at the mill yon time: but the wife cried shame; she wadna let me."

Observe how devoid of common-sense is common-sense, the moment it meddles with the things of genius. So I sent him back for his old clothes, and I now present you not indeed the hero himself, but his true wreck. The picture will mislead you, unless you allow for that sad misrepresentation of the manly mouth which takes place when a hero loses his front teeth. Observe the thin straight lips, and the strong chin: those lips, when the teeth were behind them, marked iron resolution. Add to the straight, thin, American mouth, an eye full of fire; and, by the wreck, you may divine the man.

OBSERVATIONS.

James Lambert is of ordinary size, but very clean-built and wiry. The signs of great activity still linger about him. The easy attitude in which I first saw him was that of a man who could spring across the room in a moment from where he stood.

In manner he is two men; sometimes grave, slow, and thoughtful; sometimes fiery and vivacious; and the changes are well timed; for he relates his feats with French vivacity, but makes his reflections in a slow, thoughtful way that is Scotch all over. It is just possible that "race" may have a hand in his vivacious half, for he admits a French progenitor, and "Lambert" is a French name.

I have not known him long enough to draw his whole character; but to what is revealed in his recorded acts I can add one trait; he is a man without bile. I offer one example: after describing with great spirit how he saved a respectable acquaintance, he told me that the said individual had afterwards avoided him; and then he stopped and went in a moment from his French manner to his Scotch.

"And — I hae — obsairved, sirr, that the mair part — of them I hae saved — shuns me."

Straight I exploded with ire at their baseness. But I could not convey my spleen into this heroic bosom void of bile.

"Na, sirr," said he, with the same measured thoughtfulness, "I just — think — it is ower great — a debt — to awe to ony man; and they feel it a burrden."

Almost any other man, finding, in a certain base biped, vanity too strong for gratitude, would have vented the discovery in tones, either of wrath, or of piteous complaint; but this man sounded like a patient, inquiring philosopher: certainly a faint tone of regret pierced through, but no more than became a philosopher, gently disappointed in mankind. To me, who have seen so much storming and blubbing over trifles, this thoughtful, uncomplaining dignity was as pathetic as it was noble.

If the man seems egotistical, his discourse being all about himself, you must remember that I kept drawing him out, and that the true balance of the dialogue is not presented, since I have suppressed the greater part of my questions, as not worth printing.

I ought also to tell you that his manner of relating his exploits had no touch of vanity, nor boasting, nor self-gratulation. It was a thing both strange and fine to see how he was carried away out of the dark present

into those glowing scenes, re-lighted by the sun of memory. As he related, the whole man quivered with excitement. When he was telling me how he dived for the little boy opposite "the dead-house," I took his hand, and—under cover of sympathy, being a prying scoundrel—I furtively felt his pulse. It was beating about one hundred and ten to the minute; *his heart was once more doing the deed*, and his poor blind face shone with angelic goodness, and gleamed with heroic fire.

This hero and martyr has a foible, not an uncommon one in Glasgow; but still a sad fault. He is too fond of whiskey—much.

Bookmakers' morality will say, "Why reveal the infirmity of such a man?" I'll tell you; because in less than two hundred years the first stone of honesty in biography will have to be laid; so, not to waste the world's time, I lay it now.

Since, in this best of all possible worlds, much is done for moderately good killers of men, you may be curious to know what man has done for this incomparable saver of men.

He has earned the gold medal of the Humane Society twice, and the silver about twelve times.

He has never received either.

He better deserves every order and decoration the state or the sovereign can bestow, than does any gentleman or nobleman in this land, whose bosom is a constellation. Yet not a cross nor a ribbon has ascended from the vulgar levels, where they grow like buttercups, to the breast of this immortal hero. And why? he is but a saver of men, not a killer; he is only a Christian hero; and, in the distribution of glory, the world, including the very preachers of the gospel, is as rank a heathen as ever in spite of Christ; and a fool in spite of Voltaire.

The one public honor paid him is this. — A suspension bridge has been built over the Clyde where he saved more than twenty lives that one dark night; and over this bridge two men pass gratis till they die; Bailie Harvey and Hero Lambert. The rest of mankind pays a halfpenny.

So much for his decorations. Then for his pensions. He has but one; and that is local, not imperial, though the places the man adorns are the empire and the world. The Barony Parish, Glasgow, allows him three and sixpence a week. But he was earning twenty-five to thirty when he fell blind. So that his local allowance, for benefits to mankind, does not compensate him for his calamity, by five-sixths; and his heroic and philanthropic feats are left out of the arithmetic altogether.

I propose, then, to those who govern this country, to depart from the stiff precedents of savages, and to take wider and more enlightened views of heroism, beginning with James Lambert, since they cannot begin better. They have the example of France; she bestows civic honors on the heroes who save, as well as on the heroes who kill.

I propose to the Humane Society to bestow their gold medal. Anything less would be no compliment to this great saver.

As for the English public, that needs no spur. When this narrative appears in an influential journal, hundreds will desire to improve James Lambert's condition. The best way to do that would be to secure him a fixed and large increase of income for the few years he has to live. It is out of my way, but in this one case I would receive and acknowledge donations with this object.

But I also wish to procure him the blessed boon of personal sympathy. I will not encourage a raid of staring dunces, pragmatical charlatans, and gaping

quidnuncs; for that would do him harm, not good. But I will give his present address to any ladies and gentlemen who may be able and willing to go to him in the right spirit. Any such superior soul, who will visit him in person, and with gentle hand draw him awhile from the things present, which he cannot see, to the past, which he can see, will mount high on what an old author calls "the ladder of charity," for this will be a charity in a very refined and gracious form; it will be charity + brains. None will repent such a visit: though his estate is humble, he is one of nature's gentlemen, fit company for an emperor; and he is a sight better worth seeing than half the public shows; for he is a man without his fellow.

GLOSSARY.

- a. Cry me to him, i.e., *Cry right — left — etc.*, till I find him.
- b. The lave — *The rest.*
- c. Faitour — *Feat.*
- d. Soom — *Swim.*
- e. Callant — *A boy.*
- f. Naepkin — *Handkerchief. English.*
- g. Lug — *Ear.*
- h. Twarree — *Two or three.*
- i. Washing-bay, or bayne — *Tub. French, "Bain."*
- j. Dour — *Grim — severe. Latin, "Durus."*
- k. A wean wastit — *A child thrown away.*
- l. Spate — *Flood.*
- m. Win, won, etc. — *Tenses of the old verb "wend" — to go. Saxon.*
- n. Fleichting — *Scolding.*
- o. Cummer — *A woman of the people. French, "Commère."*
- p. Scairt and skirl — *Run and squeal. Scairt is French "Sortir."*
- q. Bymby — *By and by.*
- r. Wagging on me — *Reckoning to me.*
- s. Neif — *Fist. English.*
- t. Coupit — *Upset.*
- u. Corp — *Corpse.*
- v. Fon — *Fan.*
- w. Thir — *These.*
- x. These — *Those.*

THE JILT: A YARN.

PART I.

It was a summer afternoon; the sun shone mellow upon the south sands of Tenby; the clear blue water sparkled to the horizon, and each ripple, as it came ashore, broke into diamonds. This amber sand, broad, bold, and smooth as the turf at Lord's — and, indeed, wickets are often pitched on it — has been called "Nature's finest promenade;" yet, owing to a counter attraction, it was now paraded by a single figure — a tall, straight, well-built young man, rather ruddy, but tanned and bronzed by weather; shaved smooth as an egg, and his collar, his tie, and all his dress very neat and precise. He held a deck glass, and turned every ten yards, though he had a mile to promenade. These signs denoted a good seaman. Yet his glass swept the land more than the water, and that is not like a sailor.

This incongruity, however, was soon explained and justified.

There hove in sight a craft as attractive to every true tar, from an admiral of the red to the boatswain's mate, as any cutter, schooner, brig, bark, or ship, and bore down on him with colors flying alow and aloft.

Lieutenant Greaves made all sail toward her, for it was Ellen Ap Rice, the loveliest girl in Wales.

He met her with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes, and thanked her warmly for coming. "Indeed you may," said she: "when I promised, I forgot the flower show."

"Dear me," said he, "what a pity! I would not have asked you."

"Oh," said she, "never mind; I shall not break my heart; but it seems so odd you wanting me to come out here, when you are always welcome at our house, and papa so fond of you."

Lieutenant Greaves endeavored to explain. "Why, you see, Miss Ap Rice, I'm expecting my sailing orders down, and before I go, I want — And the sight of the sea gives one courage."

"It gave me a fit of *terror* the last time I was on it."

"Ay, but you are not a sailor! it gives *me* courage to say more than I dare in your own house; you so beautiful, so accomplished, so admired, I am afraid you will never consent to throw yourself away upon a seaman."

Ellen arched her brows. "What *are* you saying, Mr. Greaves? Why, it is known all over Tenby that I renounce the military, and have vowed to be a sailor's bride."

By this it seems there were only two learned professions recognized by the young ladies at Tenby.

"Ay, ay," said Greaves, "an admiral, or that sort of thing."

"Well," said the young lady, "*of course* he would *have* to be an admiral — *eventually*. But they cannot be born admirals." At this stage of the conversation she preferred not to look Lieutenant Greaves, R.N., in the face; so she wrote pot-hooks and hangers on the sand with her parasol so carefully that you would have sworn they must be words of deepest import.

Handwritten text, possibly a signature or date, centered on the page.

So she wrote pot-books



"From a lieutenant to an admiral is a long way," said Greaves sadly.

"Yes," said she archly, "it is as far as from Tenby to Valparaiso, where my cousin Dick sailed to last year — such a handsome fellow! — and there's Cape Horn to weather. But a good deal depends on courage and perseverance." In uttering this last remark she turned her eye askant a moment, and a flash shot out of it that lighted the sailor's bonfire in a moment.

"Oh, Miss Ap Rice, do I understand you? Can I be so fortunate? If courage, perseverance, and devotion can win you, no other man shall ever — You must have seen I love you."

"It would be odd if I had not," said Ellen, blushing a little, and smiling slyly. "Why, all Tenby has seen it. You don't hide it under a bushel."

The young man turned red. "Then I deserve a round dozen at the gangway for being so indelicate."

"No, no," said the young Welshwoman, generously. "Why do I prefer sailors? Because they are so frank and open and artless and brave. Why, Mr. Greaves, don't you be stupid; your open admiration is a compliment to any girl; and I am proud of it, of course," said she gently.

"God bless you!" cried the young man. "Now I wish we were at home, that I might go down on my knees to you without making you the town-talk. Sweet, lovely, darling Ellen, will you try and love me?"

"Humph! If I had not a great esteem for you, should I be here?"

"Ay, but I am asking for more," said Greaves: "for your affection, and your promise to wait for me till I am more than a lieutenant. I dare not ask for your hand till I am a post-captain at least. Ellen, sweet Ellen, may I put this on your dear finger?"

"Why, it is a ring. No. What for?"

"Let me put it on, and then I'll tell you."

"I declare, if he had not got it ready on purpose!" said she, laughing, and was so extremely amused that she quite forgot to resist, and he whipped it on in a trice. It was no sooner on than she pulled a grave face, and demanded an explanation of this singular conduct.

"It means we are engaged," said he joyfully, and flung his cap into the air a great height and caught it.

"A trap!" screamed she. "Take it off this instant!"

"Must I?" said he sadly.

"Of course you must." And she crooked her finger instead of straightening it.

"It won't come off," said he, with more cunning than one would have expected.

"No more it will. Well, I must have my finger amputated the moment I get home. But, mind, I am not to be caught by such artifices. You must ask papa."

"So I will," cried Greaves joyfully — then, upon reflection: "He'll wonder at my impudence."

"Oh, no," said Ellen demurely; "you know he is mayor of the town, and has the drollest applications made to him at times. Ha! ha!"

"How shall I ever break it to him?" said Greaves. "A lieutenant!"

"Why, a lieutenant is a gentleman; and are you not related to one of the First Lords of the Admiralty?"

"Yes. But he won't put me over the heads of my betters. All that sort of thing is gone by."

"You need not say that. Say you are cousin to the First Lord, and then stop. That is the way to talk to a mayor. There — look at me telling him what to say — as if I cared. Oh, dear — here comes that tittling-tattling Mrs. Dodsley, and her whole brood of children and nurses. She sha'n't see what I am doing;" and Miss

Ap Rice marched swiftly into Merlin's Cave, settled her skirts, and sat down on a stone. "Oh," said she, with no great appearance of agitation, "what a goose I must be! This is the last place I ought to have come to; this is where the lovers interchange their vows — the silly things!"

This artless speech — if artless it was — brought the man on his knees to her with such an outburst of honest passion and eloquent love that her cooler nature was moved as it had never been before. She was half frightened, but flattered and touched; she shed a tear or two, and, though she drew away the hand he was mumbling, and said he oughtn't and he mustn't, there was nothing very discouraging in her way, not even when she stopped her ears and said, "You should say all this to papa." As if one could make as hot love to the mayor in his study as to the mayor's daughter in Merlin's Cave!

She was coy, and would not stay long in Merlin's Cave after this, but said nothing about going home; so they emerged from the cave, and strolled toward Giltar Point.

Suddenly there issued from the Sound, and burst upon their sight, a beautiful yacht, one hundred and fifty tons or so, cutter-rigged, bowling along before the wind thirteen knots an hour; sails white as snow and well set, hull low and shapely, wire rigging so slim it seemed of whip-cord or mermaid's hair.

"Oh, Arthur!" cried Ellen. "What a beauty!"

"And so she is," said he heartily. "Bless you for calling me 'Arthur.'"

"It slipped out — by mistake. Come to the Castle Hill. I must see her come right in — Arthur."

Arthur took Ellen's hand, and they hurried to the Castle Hill; and, as they went, kept turning their heads to watch the yacht's manœuvres; for a sailor never tires

of observing how this or that craft is handled; and the arrival of a first-class yacht in those fair but uneventful waters was very exciting to Ellen Ap Rice.

The cutter gave St. Catherine's Rock a wide berth, and ran out well to the Woolhouse Reef, then hauled up and stood on the port tack, heading for her anchorage; but an eddy wind from the North Cliffs caught her, and she broke off; so she stood on toward Monkstone Point; then came about with her berth well under her lee, mistress of the situation, as landsmen say.

Arthur kept explaining her manœuvres and the necessity for them, and, when she came about, said she was well behaved — had forereached five times her length — and was smartly handled, too.

"Oh, yes," said Ellen; "a most skilful captain, evidently."

This was too hasty a conclusion for the sober Greaves. "Wait till we see him in a cyclone, with all his canvas on that one stick, or working off a lee shore in a nor'-wester. But he can handle a cutter in fair weather and fresh water, that is certain."

"Fresh water!" said Ellen. "How dare you? And don't mock people. I can't get enough fresh water in Tenby to wash my hands."

"What, do you want them *whiter* than snow?" said Greaves, gloating on them undisguised.

"Arthur, behave, and lend me the glass."

"There, dearest."

So then she inspected the vessel, and he inspected the white hand that held the glass. It was a binocular; for even seamen nowadays seldom use the short telescope of other days; what might be called a very powerful opera-glass has taken its place.

"Goodness me!" screamed Ellen. The construction of which sentence is referred to pedagogues.

"What is the matter?"

"The captain is a blackamoor."

Having satisfied herself of the revolting fact by continued inspection, she handed the glass to Greaves. "See if he isn't," said she.

Greaves looked through the glass, and took leave to contradict her. "Blackamoor! not he. It is worse. It is a gentleman—that ought to know better—with a beastly black beard right down to his waistband."

"Oh, Arthur, how horrid! and in such a pretty ship!"

Greaves smiled indulgently at her calling a cutter a "ship;" but her blunders were beauties, he was so in love with her.

She took the glass again, and looked and talked at the same time. "I wonder what has brought him in here?"

"To look for a barber, I should hope."

"Arthur—suppose we were to send out the new hair-dresser to him? Would it not be fun? Oh! oh! oh!"

"What is it now?"

"A boat going out to him. Well, I declare—a boatful of dignitaries."

"Mercy on us!"

"Yes; I see papa, and I see the secretary of the Cambrian Club, and another gentleman—a deputation, I do believe. No—how stupid I am! Why, the new arrival must be Mr. Laxton, that wrote and told papa he was coming; he is the son of an old friend, a ship-builder. Papa is sure to ask him to dinner; and *I* ask *you*. Do come. He will be quite a lion."

"I am very unfortunate. Can't possibly come to-day. Got to dine on board the 'Warrior,' and meet the prince; name down; no getting off."

"Oh, what a pity! It would have been so nice; you and Captain Laxton together."

"Captain Laxton! Who is he?"

"Why, the gentleman with the beard."

"Hang it all, don't call him a captain."

"Not when he has a ship of his own?"

"So has a collier, and the master of a fishing-lugger. Besides, these swells are only fair-weather skippers; there's always a sailing-master aboard their vessels that takes the command if it blows a capful of wind."

"Indeed! then I despise them. But I am sorry *you* can't come, Arthur."

"Are you really, love?"

"You know I am."

"Then that is all I care for. A dandy yachtsman is no lion to me."

"We ought to go home now," said Ellen, "or we shall not have time to dress."

He had not only to dress, but to drive ten miles; yet he went with her to her very door. He put the time to profit; he got her to promise everything short of marrying him without papa's consent, and, as she was her father's darling, and in reality ruled him, not he her, that obstacle did not seem insurmountable.

That evening, the master of the yacht dined at the mayor's, and was the lion of the evening. His face was rather handsome, what one could see of it, and his beard manly. He had travelled and cruised for years, and kept his eyes and ears open; had a great flow of words, quite a turn for narrative, a ready wit, a seductive voice, and an infectious laugh. His only drawback was a restless eye. Even that he put to a good use by being attentive to everybody in turn. He was evidently charmed with Ellen Ap Rice, but showed it in a well-bred way, and did not alarm her. She was a lovely girl, and accustomed to be openly admired.

Next day Arthur called on her, and she told him

everything, and seemed sorry to have had any pleasure he had not a share in. "He made himself wonderfully agreeable," said she, "especially to papa; and oh, if you had seen how his beard wagged when he laughed — ha! ha! And what do you think, the 'Cambrians' have lost no time; they have shot him flying — invited him to their Bachelors' Ball. Ah, Arthur, the first time you and I ever danced together was at that ball a year ago. I wonder whether you remember? Well, he asked me for the first round dance."

"Confound his impudence! What did you say?"

"I said 'No;' I was engaged to the Royal Navy."

"Dear girl. And that shut him up, I hope."

"Dear me, no. He is too good-humored to be cross because a strange girl was bespoke before he came; he just laughed, and asked might he follow in its wake."

"And you said 'Yes.'"

"No, I did not, now. And you need not look so cross, for there would have been no harm if I had; but what I did say was not 'yes,' but 'hum,' and I would consult my memoranda. Never you mind who I dance with, Mr. Arthur; their name is legion. Wait till you catch me parading the sands with the creatures, and catching cold with them in Merlin's Cave."

"My own love! Come on the sands now; it is low water, and a glorious day."

"You dear goose!" said Ellen. "What, ask a lady out when it is only one clear day before a ball? Why, I am invisible to every creature but you at this moment, and even you can only stay till she comes."

"She! Who?"

"Why, the dressmaker, to be sure. Talk of the — dressmaker, and there's her knock."

"Must I go this moment?"

"Oh, no. *Let them open the door to her first.* But of course it is no use your staying while she is here. We shall be hours and hours making up our minds. Besides, we shall be up-stairs, trying on things. Arthur, don't look so. Why, the ball will be here with awful rapidity; and I'll dance with you three times out of four; I'll dance you down on the floor, my sailor bold. I never knew a Welsh girl yet couldn't dance an Englishman into a cocked hat: now that's *vulgar*."

"Not as you speak it, love. Whatever comes from your lips is poetry. I wish you could dance me into a cocked hat and two epaulets; for it is not in nature nor reason you should ever marry a lieutenant."

"It will be his fault if I don't, then."

The door was rattled discreetly, and then opened, by old Dewar, butler, footman, and chatterbox of the establishment. "The dressmaker, miss."

"Well, let Agnes take her up-stairs."

"Yes, miss."

Greaves thought it was mere selfishness to stay any longer now; so he bade her good-by.

But she would not let him go away sad. She tried to console him. "Surely," said she, "you would wish me to look well in public. It is *the* ball of Tenby. I want you to be proud of your prize, and not find you have captured a dowdy."

The woman of society and her reasons failed to comfort Lieutenant Greaves; so then, as she was not a girl to accept defeat, she tried the woman of nature: she came nearer him, and said earnestly, "Only one day, Arthur! Spare me the pain of seeing you look unhappy." In saying this, very tenderly, she laid her hand softly on his arm and turned her lovely face and two beautiful eyes full up to him.

A sweet inarticulate sound ensued, and he *did* spare

her the pain of seeing him look unhappy, for he went off flushed and with very sparkling eyes.

Surely female logic has been underrated up to date of this writing.

Greaves went away the happiest lieutenant in the Royal Navy, and content to kill time till the ball day. He dined at the club; smoked a cigar on the Castle Hill, and entered his lodgings just as the London day mail was delivered. There was a paper parallelogram for him, with a seal as big as the face of a chronometer. Order from the Admiralty to join the Redoubtable at Portsmouth—for disposal. Private note, by the secretary, advising him to lose no time, as he might be appointed flag-lieutenant to the Centaur, admiral's ship on the China station, from which quick promotion was sure to follow in the ordinary course of the service.

Before he knew Ellen Ap Rice his heart would have bounded with exultation at this bright prospect: but now that heart seemed cut in two; one half glowed with ambition, the other sickened at the very thought of leaving Ellen half won. But those who serve the nation may doubt and fear, but have parted with the right to vacillate. There was but one thing to do—start for London by the fast train next morning at ten A. M.

He sent a hurried note to Ellen by messenger, telling her what had occurred, and imploring an interview. His messenger brought him back a prompt reply. Papa was going to Cardiff in the morning on business; would breakfast at half-past eight precisely. He must invite himself to breakfast that night, and come at eight.

He did so, and Ellen came down directly, with the tear in her eye. They comforted each other, agreed to look on it as a sure step to a creditable union, and, meantime, lessen the separation by a quick fire of letters. He would write from every port he landed in, and would

have a letter for every homeward-bound ship they brought to out at sea, and she would greet him with a letter at every port.

When they had duly sealed this compact, the mayor came in, and that kept them both within bounds.

But Greaves's prospect of promotion was discussed, and the mayor showed a paternal interest, and said, "Come back to Tenby a captain, and we shall all be proud of you; shall we not, Nelly?"

When a father says so much as that to a young fellow who has been openly courting his daughter, it hardly bears two meanings; and Greaves went away, brave and buoyant, and the sting taken out of the inopportune parting.

He was soon at Portsmouth, and aboard the Redoubtable.

He was appointed flag-lieutenant on board the *Centaur*, then lying at Spithead, bound on a two years' voyage. Under peculiar circumstances she was to touch at Lisbon, Madeira, and the Cape; but her destination was Hong-Kong, where she was to lie for some time in command of the station.

Next morning a letter from Ellen: he kissed it devotedly before he opened it. After some kind things that were balm to him she seemed to gravitate toward that great event in a girl's life, the ball: "I did so miss you, dear! and that impudent Mr. Laxton had the first dance—for, of course, I never thought of putting anybody in your place—but he would not give up the second any more for that. He said I had promised. Oh, and he asked me if I would honor his yacht with my presence, and he would take me a cruise round Sunday Island. I said, 'No; I was a bad sailor.' 'Oh,' said he, 'we will wait for a soldier's wind.' What is a 'soldier's wind'? When I would not consent, he got papa by

himself, and papa consented directly for both of us. I cannot bear such impudent men, that will not take a 'No.'"

Arthur wrote back very affectionately, but made a point of her not sailing in Laxton's yacht. It was not proper, nor prudent. The wind might fall; the yacht be out all night; and, in any case, the man was a stranger, of whom they knew nothing, but that his appearance was wild and disreputable, and that he was a mere cruiser and a man of pleasure. He hoped his Ellen would make this little sacrifice to his feelings. This was his one remonstrance.

Ellen replied to it: "You dear jealous goose, did you think I would go on board his yacht — the only lady? Of course there was a large party; and you should have seen the Miss Frumps, and that Agnes Barker, how they flung themselves at his head; it was disgusting! But don't you worry about the man, dear. I am sorry I told you. We were back to dinner."

Then the fair writer went off to other things; but there was a postscript: —

"Captain Laxton has called to bid good-by, and his beautiful yacht is just sailing out of the roads."

As what little interest there is in this part of the story centres in Miss Ap Rice's letters, I will just say that Greaves had one from her at Lisbon which gave him unmixed pleasure. It was long and kind, though not so gay as usual. As for this Laxton, he appeared to have faded out entirely, for she never mentioned his name.

At Madeira Greaves received a letter shorter and more sprightly. In a postscript she said: "Who do you think has fallen down from the clouds? That Mr. Laxton, without his yacht. We asked him what had become of her. 'Condemned,' said he solemnly. 'In the Levant

a Greek brig outsailed her; in the Channel here a French lugger lay nearer the wind. After that, no more cutters for me.' We think he is a little cracked. That odious Agnes Barker will not let him alone. I never saw such a shameless flirt!"

The ship lay eight days at Madeira, and on the seventh day he received another letter, begging him to come home as soon as possible, for she was subject to downright persecution from Captain Laxton, and her father was much too easy. For the first time in her life she really felt the need of a protector.

This letter set Greaves almost wild. She wanted him back to protect her now, and he bound for the East, and could not hope to see her for two years.

Nothing for it but to pace the deck and rage internally. No fresh advices possible before the Cape. He couldn't sleep, and this operated curiously: he passed for a super-naturally vigilant lieutenant.

There was a commander on board, a sprig of nobility, a charming fellow, but rather an easy-going officer; he used to wonder at Greaves, and, having the admiral's ear, praised him for a model. "The beggar never sleeps at all," said he. "I think he will kill himself."

"He will be the only one of ye," growled the admiral. But he took notice of Greaves — all the more that a Lord of the Admiralty, who was his personal friend, had said a word for him in one of those meek postscripts which mean so much when written by the hand of power.

At last they reached the Cape, and dropped anchor.

The mail-boat came out with letters.

There was none for Greaves.

No letter at all! The deck seemed to rise under him, and he had to hold on by the forebraces; and even that was as much as he could do, being somewhat weakened by sleepless nights. Several officers came round him,

and the ship's surgeon applied salts and brandy, and he recovered, but looked very wild. Then the surgeon advised him to go ashore for a change. Leave was granted immediately, and the second lieutenant went with him good-naturedly enough. They made inquiries, and found another mail was due in two days. They took up their quarters at a hotel, and there Greaves was so wretched, and his companion so sympathetic, that at last the tormented lover made a confidant of him.

"Oh, it will be all right," said the other. "Why should she want you home if she liked that lubber?"

"I don't know," said poor Greaves. "The last letter was not like her—such a high-spirited girl; and it looked as if he was getting her into his power. If he has, all the worse for both of us, for the day I catch him I shall kill him!"

Next day the mail came in, and as Greaves had left his address at the post-office, a letter was brought him, all wetted and swollen with rain, the boy having carried it without the least attempt to protect it from a thick drizzle that enveloped the town that day.

Greaves tore it open. It was fatally short. This is every syllable of it:—

Forget one unworthy of you. I can resist no longer. I am fascinated. I am his slave, and must follow him round the world. Perhaps he will revenge you.

Dear Arthur, I did not mean to deceive. I am but young; I thought I loved you as you deserve. Pray, pray forgive me!
E.

Suspense, the worst of all our tortures, was over; the blow had fallen. Arthur Greaves was a man again.

"Yes, I forgive you, my poor girl," he groaned. "But (with sudden fury) I'll kill *him*!"

He told his friend it was all over, and even gave him

the letter. "It is not her fault," he sobbed. "The fellow has cast a spell over her. No more about it, or I should soon go mad."

And from that hour he endured in silence, and checked all return to the subject very sternly.

But his friend talked, and told the other officers how Greaves had been jilted, and was breaking his heart; and he looked so ghastly pale that altogether he met with much honest sympathy. The very admiral was sorry, in his way. He had met him in the street, looking like a ghost, and his uniform hanging loose on him, his stalwart form was so shrunk. "Confound the women!" growled the old boy to his favorite, the commander. "There's the best officer in the ship, a first-class mathematician, an able navigator, a good seaman, and a practical gunner, laid low by some young baggage — not worth his little finger, I'll be bound."

Next day he sent for the young man.

"Lettenant Greaves!"

"Sir."

"Here's a transport going home, and nobody to command her. They have come to me. I thought of sending the second lettenant; it would have been more convenient, for, by Jove! sir, when you are gone, I may have to sail the ship myself. However, I have altered my mind; you will take the troops to Plymouth."

"Yes, admiral."

"Then you'd better take a fortnight ashore for your health. You are very ill, sir."

"Thank you, admiral."

"Come out to Hong-Kong how you can. You can apply to the Admiralty for your expenses, *if you think it is any use.*"

Greaves's eye flashed and his pale cheek colored.

"Ay, ay," said the admiral, "I see these instructions

are not so disagreeable as they ought to be. A steam tug and a cargo of lobsters! But you must listen to me: an honest sailor like you is no match for these girls; it is not worth your while to be sick or sorry for any one of them. There, there! send your traps aboard the tub, and clear the harbor of her as soon as you can. She is under your orders, sir."

"God bless you, admiral!" sobbed Greaves, and retired all in a hurry, partly to hide his emotions, and partly because it is not usual, in the service, to bless one's superiors to their faces; it is more the etiquette to curse them behind their backs.

Now was Greaves a new man. Light shone in his eye; vigor returned to his limbs. This most unexpected stroke of good fortune put another face on things. He had the steamboat coaled and victualled with unheard-of expedition, got the troops on board, and steamed away for Plymouth.

They had fair weather, and his hopes rose. After all, Ellen could hardly have taken any irretrievable step. She had never denied his claim on her. A good licking bestowed on Laxton might break the spell, and cool his ardor into the bargain. He felt sure he could win her back somehow. He had been out of sight when this fellow had succeeded in deluding her; but now he should get fair play.

He landed the troops at Plymouth and made his report; then off to Tenby at once. He went straight to the mayor's house. A girl opened the door.

"Miss Ap Rice?"

"She don't live here, sir, now. Lawk! it is Captain Greaves. Come in, sir, and I'll send Mr. Dewar."

Greaves went in, full of misgivings, and sat down in the dining-room.

Presently Dewar came — a white-haired old fellow,

who had been at sea in early life, but was now the mayor's factotum, and allowed himself great liberties. He came in open-mouthed. "Ah, Captain Greaves, it is a bad business. I'm a'most sorry to see you here. Gone, sir, gone! and we shall never see her again, I'm afraid."

"Gone! What, run away — with that scoundrel?"

"Well, sir, it did look like running away, being so sudden. But it was a magnificent wedding, for that matter, and they left in a special steamer, with a gilt starn and the flags of all nations a-flying."

"Married!"

"You may well be surprised, sir. But, for as sudden as it was, I seen it a-coming. You see, sir, he was always at her — morning, noon, and night. He'd have tired out a saint — leastways, a female one. Carriage and four to take her to some blessed old ruin or other. *She* didn't care for the ruin, but she couldn't withstand the four horses, which they are seldom seen in Tenby. Flowers every day, Hindia shawls, diamond necklace, a wheedling tongue, and a beard like a Christmas fir. I blame that there beard for it. Ye see, captain, these young ladies never speaks their real minds about them beards. Lying comes natural to them; and so, to flatter a clean respectable body like you or me, they makes pretend, and calls beards ojious. And so they are. That there Laxton, his beard supped my soup for a wager agin his belly; and with him chattering so he'd forget to wipe it for ever so long. Sarved him right if I'd brought him a basin and a towel before all the company. But these young ladies they don't vally that; what they looks for in a man is to be the hopposite of a woman. They hates and despises their own sect; so what they loves in a man is hunblushing himpudence and a long beard. The more they complains of a man's brass, the more they likes

it; and as for a beard, they'd have him look like a beast, so as he looked very unlike a woman, which a beard it is. But if they once fingers one of them beards it is all up with 'em; and that is how I knew what was coming; for one day I was at my pantry window a-cleaning my silver, when miss and him was in the little garden — seated on one bench they was, and not fur off one another neither. He was a-reading poetry to her, and his head so near her that I'm blest if his tarnation beard wasn't almost in her lap. Her eyes was turned up to heaven in a kind of trance, a-tasting of the poetry; but whiles she was a-looking up to heaven for the meaning of that there sing-song, blest if her little white fingers wasn't twisting the ends of that there beard into little ringlets, without seeming to know what they was doing. Soon as I saw that I said, 'Here's a go! It is all up with Captain Greaves. He have limed her, this here cockney sailor.' For if ever a woman plays with a man's curls, or his whiskers, or his beard, she is netted like a partridge; it is a sure sign. So should we be if the women's hair was loose; but they has so much mercy as to tie it up and make it as hugly as they can and full o' pins, and that saves many a man from being netted and caged and all. So soon arter that she named the day."

Greaves sat dead silent under this flow of envenomed twaddle, like a Spartan under the knife. But at last he could bear it no longer. He groaned aloud, and buried his contorted face in his hands.

"Confound my chattering tongue!" said honest Dewar, and ran to the sideboard and forced a glass of brandy on him. He thanked him and drank it, and told him not to mind him, but to tell him where she was settled with the fellow.

"Settled, sir?" said Dewar. "No such luck. She

writes to her papa every week, but it is always from some fresh place. 'Dewar,' says his worship to me, 'I've married my girl to the Wandering Jew.' Oh, he don't hide his mind from me. He tells me that this Laxton have had a ship built in the north, a thundering big ship, for he's as rich as Crœsus—and he have launched her to sail round the world. My fear is, he will sail her to the bottom of the ocean."

"Poor Ellen!"

"Captain, captain, don't fret your heart out for her; she is all right. She loves the man, and she loves excitement; which he will give it her. She'd have had a ball here every week if she could; and now she will see a new port every week. She is all right. Let her go her own road. She broke her troth to do it; and we don't think much, in Wales, of girls as do that, be they gentle or be they simple, look you."

Greaves looked up and said sternly, "Not one word against her before me. I have borne all I can."

Old Dewar wasn't a bit offended. "Ah, you are a man, you are," said he. Then, in a cordial way, "Captain Greaves, sir, you will stay with us, now you are come?"

"Me stay here?"

"Ay; why not? Ye mustn't bear spite against the old man. He stood out for you longer than I ever knowed him to stand out against *her*. But she could always talk him over; she could talk anybody over. It is all haccident my standing so true to you. It wasn't worth her while to talk old Dewar over; that is the reason. Do ye stay, now. You'll be like a son to the old man, look you. He is sadly changed since she went—quite melancholy, and keeps a-blaming of hisself for letting her be master."

"Dewar," said the young man, "I cannot. The sight

of the places where I walked with her, and loved her, and she seemed to love me — oh, no! — to London by the first train, and then to sea. Thank God for the sea! The sea cannot change into lying land. My heart has been broken ashore. Perhaps it may recover in a few years at sea. Give him my love, Dewar, and God bless *you!* ”

He almost ran out of the house, and fixed his eyes on the ground, to see no more objects embittered by recollections of happiness fled. He made his way to his uncle in London, reported himself to the Admiralty, and asked for a berth in the first ship bound to China. He was told, in reply, he could go out in any merchant-ship; but as his pay would not be interrupted, the Government could not be chargeable for his expenses.

In spite of a dizzy headache, he went into the City next day to arrange for his voyage.

But at night he was taken with violent shivering, and before morning was light-headed.

A doctor was sent for in the morning.

Next day the case was so serious that a second was called in.

The case declared itself — gastric fever and jaundice.

They administered medicines, which, as usual in these cases, did the stomach a little harm, and the system no good.

His uncle sent for a third physician; a rough but very able man. He approved all the others had done — and did the very reverse; ordered him a milk diet, tepid aspersions, frequent change of bed and linen, and no medicine at all but a little bark, and old Scotch whiskey in moderation.

“Tell me the truth,” said his sorrowful uncle.

“I always do,” said the doctor; “that is why they call me a brute. Well, sir, the case is not hopeless *yet*. But

I will not deceive you; I fear he is going a longer voyage than China."

So may the mind destroy the body, and the Samson who can conquer a host be laid low by a woman.

PART II.

YOUTH, a good constitution, good nursing, the right food and drink, and no medicine, saved the life of Arthur Greaves.

But gastric fever and jaundice are terrible foes to attack a man in concert; they left him as unlike the tanned and ruddy seaman of our first scene as the wrecked ship, battered against the shore, is to the same vessel when she breasted the waves under canvas. His hair was but half an inch long, his grizzly beard two inches; and his sunken cheeks as yellow as saffron. They told him he was out of danger, and offered him a barber to shave his chin — the same that had shaved his head a fortnight before.

"No," said the convalescent; "not such a fool."

He explained to his uncle in private: "I have lost my Ellen for want of a beard. I won't lose another that way, if I ever have one."

He turned his now benumbed heart toward his profession, and pined for blue water. His physician approved; and so, though still weakish and yellowish, he shipped as passenger in the *Phoebe*, bound for Bombay and China, and went on board at Gravesend. She was registered nine hundred tons, and carried out a mixed cargo of hardware and Manchester goods, including flaming cottons got up only for the East, where Englishmen admire them for their Oriental color. She was well

manned at starting, and ably commanded from first to last by Captain Curtis and six officers. The first mate, Mr. Lewis, was a very experienced seaman, and quite a friendship sprung up between him and Flag-Lieutenant Greaves. The second mate, Castor, was an amiable dare-devil, but had much to learn in navigation, though in mere seamanship he was well enough. Fortunately he knew his deficiencies, and was teachable.

A prosperous voyage is an uneventful one; and there never was a more humdrum voyage than the *Phœbe's* from Gravesend to Bombay. She was towed from Gravesend to Deal, where an easterly wind sprung up, and, increasing, carried her past the "Lizard," and out of sight of land; soon after that the wind veered a point or two to the northward. She sighted Madeira on the seventh day, and got the N. E. trades; they carried her two degrees north of the line. Between that and 2° S. she fell into the doldrums. But she got the S. E. trades sooner than usual, and made the best of it; set the foretopmast studding-sail, and went a little out of her course. At 34° S. she got into the steady nor'-wester, and, in due course, anchored in Table Bay.

The diamond fever being at its height, several hands deserted her at the Cape. But she had fair weather, and reached Bombay without any incident worth recording. By this time Greaves had put on flesh and color, and though his heart had a scar that often smarted, it bled no longer; and as to his appearance, he was himself again, all but a long and very handsome beard.

At Bombay the *Phœbe* landed part of her cargo, and all her passengers, but took a few fresh ones on board for China—a Portuguese merchant bound for Macao, and four ladies, two of them officers' wives returning to their husbands, and two spinsters going out to join their relatives at Hong-Kong. They were all

more or less pretty and intelligent, and brightened the ship amazingly; yet one day every man in her wished, with all his soul, every one of those ladies was out of her. She also shipped forty Lascars, to make up for twenty white men she had lost by death and desertion.

The Phoebe had fair weather to Penang, and for some time after, but not enough of it. However, after the usual bother in the Straits of Malacca, she got clear, and carried a light breeze with her. Captain Curtis feared it would be down sun, down wind; but the breeze held through the first and greater part of the second watch; and then, sure enough, it fell dead calm.

Mr. Lewis had the morning watch; the ropes were coiled up at one bell, the whip rigged, the deck wetted and sanded, and they were holystoning it when day began to break. Then there loomed the black outline of a strange sail lying on the Phoebe's port beam, a quarter of a mile off. The sun soon gets his full power in that latitude, and in a minute the vessel burst out quite clear, a topsail schooner of some four hundred tons, with a long snaky hull, taunt, raking masts, and black mast-heads, everything very trig alow and aloft, sails extremely white; she carried five guns of large calibre on each side.

Lewis reported her to the captain directly, and he came on deck. They both examined her with their glasses. She puzzled them.

"What do you make of her, Lewis? Looks like a Yankee."

"So I thought, sir, till I saw her armament."

Here Greaves joined them, and the captain turned toward him. "Can she be one of your China squadron?"

"Hardly, unless the admiral has a schooner for his tender; and, if so, she would be under a pennant."

Lewis suggested she might be a Portuguese schooner looking out for pirates.

Captain Curtis said she might, and he should like to know; so he ordered the driver to be brailed up, and the ship's colors hoisted.

The next moment it was eight bells, and pipe to breakfast. But Captain Curtis and his companions remained on deck to see the stranger hoist her colors in reply.

The schooner did not show a rag of bunting. She sat the water, black, grim, snakelike, silent.

Her very crew were invisible; yet one glance at her rigging had showed the officers of the *Phœbe* she was well manned.

Captain Curtis had his breakfast brought him on deck.

The vessels drifted nearer each other, as often happens in a dead calm. So, at 8.50 A. M., Captain Curtis took a trumpet, and hailed the stranger, "*Schooner ahoy!*"

No answer.

The *Phœbe's* men tumbled up, and clustered on the forecastle, and hung over the bulwarks; for nothing is more exciting to a ship's company than hailing another vessel at sea.

Yet not one of the schooner's crew appeared.

This was strange, unnatural, and even alarming.

The captain, after waiting some time, repeated his hail still louder.

This time a single figure showed on board the schooner — a dark, burly fellow, with a straight mustache, a little tuft on his chin, and wearing a Persian fez. He stood by the foremast swiftsure of the main rigging, and bawled through his trumpet, "Hullo!"

"What schooner is that?"

"What ship is that?"

"The Phœbe."

"Where from, and where bound?"

"Penang to Hong-Kong. Who are *you*?"

"The Black Rover."

"Where bound?"

"Nowhere. Cruising."

"Why don't — ye — show — your colors?"

"Ha! ha!"

As this strange laugh rung through the trumpet across the strip of water that now parted the two vessels, the Mephistophelian figure dived below, and the schooner was once more deserted, to all appearance.

It was curious to see how Captain Curtis and his first mate now evaded their own suspicions, and were ingenious in favorable surmises. Might she not be an armed slaver? or, as Lewis had suggested, a Portuguese?

"That fellow who answered the hail had the cut of a Portuguese."

But here Mr. Castor put in his word. "If she is looking for pirates, she hasn't far to go for one, I'm thinking," said the hare-brained young man.

"Nonsense, sir!" said the captain. "What do you know about pirates? Did ye ever see one as near as this?"

"No, sir."

"No more did I," said Greaves.

"*You!*" said Castor. "Not likely. When they see a Queen's ship they are all wings and no beak. But they can range up alongside a poor devil of a merchantman. Not seen a pirate? no; they are rare birds now; but I have seen ships of burden and ships of war, and this is neither. She is low in the water, yet she carries no freight, for she floats like a cork. She is armed and well manned, yet no crew to be seen. The devils are

under hatches till the time comes. If she isn't a pirate, what is she? However, I'll soon know."

"Don't talk so wild, Castor," said the captain. "And how can you know? They won't answer straight, and they won't show their colors."

"Oh, there's a simple way you have not thought of," said the sapient Castor; "and I'll take that way, if you will allow me — *I'll board her!*"

At this characteristic proposal, made with perfect composure, the others looked at him with a certain ironical admiration.

"Board her!" said the captain. "I'll be d——d if you do!"

"Why not, captain? There, that shows you think she is wicked. Why, we *must* find out what she is — somehow."

"We shall know soon enough," said the captain gloomily. "I am not going to risk my officers; if anybody boards her, it shall be me."

"Oh, that is the game, is it?" said Castor reproachfully. "Why, captain, you are a married man. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"No more words, sir, if you please!" said the captain sternly. "Step forward and give the order to sling a butt, and get a boat ready for target practice. I shall exercise the guns, being a calm. Perhaps he thinks we are weaker than we are."

As soon as Castor's back was turned he altered his tone, and said, with much feeling, "I know that fool-hardy young man's mother. How could I look her in the face if I let him board that devil before we know her intentions?"

A butt was ballasted with sand, so as to secure its floating steadily, bung-hole up; the bung was removed, and a boat-hook wedged in, bearing the ensign. The

butt was then launched, and towed out half a mile to starboard, and the *Phœbe* tried her guns on it.

If she had anticipated this meeting, the ship could have poured a formidable broadside into the mysterious stranger, for she carried three 32-pound carronades of a side on her quarter-deck and thirteen 18-pounders of a side on her gun-deck. But it was the old story; the times were peaceable, the men were berthed on the gun-deck, and, for their convenience, eighteen out of the twenty-six guns had been struck down into the hold.

With the remaining guns on the starboard side they fired at the butt, and so carefully that, after an hour's practice, it was brought back very little the worse. The only telling shot was made on the gun-deck by a gunner, whose foot slipped somehow, and he dropped a 32-pound ball on Greaves's ankle, disabling that unfortunate officer: he was carried to his cabin in great pain, and there attended by the surgeon.

The commotion caused by this misfortune was hardly over upon the quarter-deck when an unexpected incident occurred—an act of direct insubordination. Mr. Castor had put on his uniform, and persuaded two poor fellows, an ignorant Lascar and a reckless Briton like himself, to go out to the schooner in the boat. They slipped into her as soon as the party came on board with the butt, and at first pretended to be baling her out and examining her for leaks; but they worked quietly alongside till they got under the ship's bows, and then dropped their oars gently into the water, and pulled for the schooner like mad.

They were a third of the way before Captain Curtis caught sight of them. He roared to them to come back, and threatened to put them in irons. But none are so deaf as those who won't hear; and he did not use his

trumpet, lest the enemy should think they were disunited on board the ship.

He and Lewis, therefore, now looked on in silence, and literally perspired with anxiety for the fate of Castor and his boat's crew; and although their immediate anxiety was as unselfish as it was keen, yet they were also conscious that, if Castor lost his life in this rash enterprise, that would prove the commander of the schooner felt strong enough to attack *them* — no quarter on either side — and intended to do it.

At this terrible moment, when their eyes were strained to observe every movement in the schooner, and their nerves strung up like violin strings, female voices broke gayly in upon them with innocent chatter that, for once, jarred as badly as screams. The lady passengers had kept very snug during the firing, but finding it was quite over, burst on the deck in a body.

First Lady. Oh, that's the ship we have been saluting.

Second Lady. A royal salute.

Third Lady. Is it the Duke of Edinburgh's ship, captain?

No answer.

Third Lady. What a beauty!

First Lady. Why does she not salute us back, captain?

Captain. Got no guns, perhaps.

First Lady. Oh, yes, she has. Those black things peeping out are guns.

Second Lady. Ah, there's one of our boats going to call on her.

Third Lady. Oh, captain, may we go on board of her?

Captain. No, ma'am.

Third Lady. Oh, dear! Why not?

Captain. That is my business.

The fair speaker tossed her head and said, "Well, I'm sure!" but she drew back with red cheeks, and the tears in her eyes, at being snubbed so suddenly and unreasonably; the other ladies gathered round her, and the words, "Cross old thing!" were heard to issue from the party, but fell unheeded, for neither the captain nor Mr. Lewis had eyes or ears except for the schooner and the boat. As the latter neared the ship, several faces peeped, for a moment, at the port-holes of the schooner.

Yet, when the boat ran alongside the schooner amidships, there was no respect shown to Castor's uniform, nor, indeed, common civility: it would have been no more than the right thing to pipe the side; but there were no sidesmen at all, nor even a side-rope.

Observing this, Captain Curtis shook his head very gravely.

But the dare-devil Castor climbed the schooner's side like a cat, and boarded her in a moment, then gave his men an order, and disappeared. The men pulled rapidly away from the schooner, and a snarl of contempt and horror broke from Curtis and his first mate. They seemed to be abandoning their imprudent but gallant officer.

They pulled about a hundred yards, and then rested on their oars, and waited.

Then every sailor on board the *Phœbe* saw instinctively that Castor felt his danger, and had declined to risk any life but his own. He must have ordered the men to lie to a certain time, then give him up for lost, and return in safety to the ship. This trait and his daring made Castor, in one single moment, the darling of the whole ship's company.

The ladies were requested to go below, on some pre-

tence or other, and the ship was cleared for action as far as possible.

Meantime words can hardly describe the racking suspense that was endured by the officers, and in a great degree by the crew, of the *Phoebe*. The whole living heart of that wooden structure throbbed for one man.

Five minutes passed — ten — twenty — thirty — yet he did not reappear.

Apprehension succeeded to doubt, and despair to apprehension.

At last they gave him up, and the burning desire for vengeance mingled with their fears for their own safety. So strong was this feeling that the next event, the pirate's attack upon that ill-fated officer's ship, was no longer regarded with unmixed dread. The thirst for vengeance mingled with it.

At ten o'clock A. M. the strained eyes on board the *Phoebe* saw two sidesmen appear amidships, and fix scarlet side-ropes.

Then came an officer and hailed *Castor's* boat. The men pulled to the schooner. Then *Castor* appeared, and went down by the ropes into the boat; he and the officer touched hats. *Castor* sat down in the stern-sheets, and the men gave way.

The ship's company cheered, the side was piped, and the insubordinate officer received on board with all the honors. Caps were waved, eyes glistened, and eager hands extended to him; but he himself did not seem so very exultant. He was pleased with his reception, however, and said, in his quaint way, "This is jolly. I am not to be put in irons, then?"

The captain drew him apart. "Well, what is she?"

"Don't know."

"Why, what do you mean? You have been near an hour aboard her."

"But I am none the wiser. Captain, I wish you would have us all into your cabin, and then I'll tell you a rum story; perhaps you will understand it among you, for you know my head-piece isn't A 1."

This advice was taken directly, and Castor related his adventures, in full conclave, with closed doors.

MR. CASTOR'S NARRATIVE.

"The beggar did not hang out so much as a rope to me. I boarded his hooker the same way I should like to board her again with thirty good cutlasses at my back; and I ordered the boat to lie out of harm's way for an hour.

"Well, I soon found myself on her quarter-deck, under the awning. By George! sir, it was alive with men, as busy as bees, making their little preparations, drat 'em. Some were oiling the locks of the guns, some were cleaning small-arms, some were grinding cutlasses. They took no notice of me, and I stood there looking like an ass.

"I wondered whether they took me for a new officer just joined; but that was not likely. However, I wasn't going to notice *them*, as they hadn't the manners to notice me. So there I stood and watched them. And I had just taken out my vesuvians to light a cigar, when a middle-aged man, in a uniform I don't know, but the metal of it was silver, came bustling up, touched his cap to the deck, and brushed past me as if I was invisible; so I hung on to his coat-tails, and brought him to under all his canvas."

This set the youngest mate giggling, but he was promptly frowned down.

"'Hullo!' says he, 'what are ye about? Why, who the deuce are *you*?'

"'Second mate of the Phœbe, alongside,' says I.

“‘Mate of the Phœbe,’ says he; ‘then what brings you on board of *us*?’

“That was rather a staggerer — but I thought a bit, and said I wanted to see the captain of the schooner.

“Well, sir, at this some of the men left off working, and looked up at me as if I was some strange animal.

“‘*Do* you?’ says the officer; ‘then you are the only man aboard that does.’ Then he turned more friendly like, and says, ‘Look here, young gentleman, don’t you go to meet trouble. Wait till it comes to you. Go back to your ship, before *she* sees you.’

“‘She! Who?’

“‘No matter. You sheer off, and leave our captain alone.’

“Now, gentlemen, I’m a good-tempered chap, and you may chaff me till all is blue, but I can’t stand intimidation. If they threaten me, it puts my blood up. At school, if another boy threatened me, I never answered him; my fist used to fly at his mouth as soon as the threat was out of it.’

“Good little boy,” said Lewis.

But the captain was impatient. “Come, sir, we don’t want your boyish reminiscences: to the point, please.”

“Ay, ay, sir. Well, then, the moment he threatened me, I just turned my back on him and made for the companion-ladder.

“‘Avast there!’ roared the officer, in an awful fright. ‘Nobody uses that ladder but the captain himself and — Man alive, if you *will* see him, follow me.’ So he led me down the main hatchway. By the chain-cable tier I came all of a sudden on three men in irons; ugly beggars they were, and wild-looking, reckless chaps. One of them ran a spare anklet along the bar, and says to me, ‘Here you are; room for one more.’ But my companion soon stopped his jaw. ‘Silence in irons, or he’ll cut

your tongue out,' says he. He wouldn't go to the captain with me; but he pointed aft, and whispered, 'Last cabin but one, starboard side.' Then he sheered off, and I went for'ard and knocked at the cabin door. No answer; so I knocked louder. No answer; so I turned the handle and opened the door."

"Young madman!" groaned the captain.

"Not so very. *I had my little plan.*"

"Oh, he had his little plan," said Curtis, ironically, pityingly, paternally. Then, hotly, "Go on, sir; don't keep us on tenter-hooks like this."

"Well, captain, I opened that door, and oh, my eye! it wasn't a cabin; it was a nobleman's drawing-room: pile carpet an inch thick; beautiful painted ceiling; so many mirrors down to the ground, and opposite each other, they made it look like a big palace; satin-wood tables; luxurious couches and chairs; a polished brass stove, but all the door-handles silver; venetians, and rose-colored blinds and curtains. The sun just forced its way through, and made everything pink. It was a regular paradise; but, instead of an angel, there was a great hulking chap, squatted cross-legged on an ottoman at the farther end, smoking a hookah as long and twisty as a boa-constrictor. The beggar wasn't smoking honest tobacco neither, but mixed with rose-leaves and cinnamon shavings, and, in my opinion, a little opium, for he turned up his eyes like an owl in paradise."

"Not so very formidable, then."

"Formidable!—well, I wouldn't answer for that, at the proper time, and at the head of his cut-throats; for he was a precious big chap, with black brows, and a wicked-looking mustache and tuft. He was the sort of chap that nigger who smothers his wife in the play says he *killed*: 'a malignant and a turbaned Turk,' you know. But then it wasn't his fighting hour; he was in smoker's

paradise, and it's my belief you might have marched up to him and knocked him on the head — like one of those devil-may-care penguins that won't budge for a cannon-ball — and then he would have gone smoking on the ground till you cut his head off and took away his pipe. But you'll find the 'Malignant' had a protector, worse luck, and one that didn't smoke spice, but only looked it. Well, captain, I came up to the nearest table, and hit it pretty hard with my fist, to see if I could make that thundering picture jump."

"What picture?"

"Why, the 'Malignant and the turbaned.' Devil a bit! He took no notice. So then I bawled at the beggar. 'Your most obedient, sir; I'm the second mate of the Phœbe, lying alongside, and the captain has sent me to compare longitudes.'

"The 'Malignant' took no notice; just glared at me, and smoked his pipe. He looked just like that 'Malignant Turban' that plays whist with you by machinery in London, and fixes his stony eyes on you all the time; but, with me bawling at him, a door opened, and in came a flood of light, and, in the middle of it — oh, Lord!"

"Well, what?"

"Just the loveliest woman I ever clapped eye on. The vision took me all aback, and I suppose I stared at her as hard as the 'Malignant' was staring at vacancy; for she smiled at my astonishment, and made me a sort of a haughty courtesy, and waved her hand for me to sit down. Then says she, mighty civil — too civil by half — 'Have I the pleasure of addressing the captain of that beautiful ship?'

"'I'm her second officer, ma'am,' says I, but I was too dazzled by her beauty to make her up any lies all in a moment.

"'Bound for China?' says she, like honey.

“‘Yes, ma’am.’

“‘A large crew?’ says she, like treacle.

“‘About ninety, ma’am,’ says I, very short, for I began to smell a rat.

“‘Many European sailors among them?’ says she.

“‘So then I saw what the beautiful fiend would be at, and I said, ‘About fifty.’

“‘Indeed!’ says she, smiling like Judas. ‘You know ladies will be curious, and I could only count twenty-five.’

“‘The rest were below, coiling ropes,’ says I.

“‘So she laughed at that, and said, ‘But I saw plenty of Lascars.’

“‘Oh, our Lascars are picked men,’ says I.

“‘I wish you joy of them,’ she says. ‘We don’t have them here: not to be trusted in *emergencies*, you know.’

“‘While I was swallowing this last pill she at me again. Did we often exercise our guns? I said of course we did, in a calm. ‘Why,’ said she, ‘that is not much use; the art is to be able to hit ships and *things* as you are rising or falling on the waves — so they *tell* me,’ says she, correcting herself.

“‘The beautiful devil made my blood run cold. She knew too much.

“‘What is your cargo?’ says she, just as if she was our bosom friend. But I wouldn’t stand any more of it.

“‘Nutmegs,’ says I. So she laughed and said, ‘Well, but seriously?’ So then I thought chaffing her would do no good, and I told her we had landed the valuable part of our cargo at Bombay, and had only a lot of grates and fire-irons left. I put on a friendly tone, all sham — like hers, you know — and told her that tea ships depended on the cargo they brought home; not on the odds and ends they took out just to ballast the craft.”

“‘Well, what was the next thing?’”

"Oh, I remember she touched a silver bell, and a brown girl, in loose trousers and cocked-up shoes and a turban, came in with a gold tray — or it might be silver-gilt — and a decanter of wine; and the lovely demon said, 'Pour out some wine, Zulema.'

"'No, thank you, ma'am,' said I. So she laughed and said it wasn't poisoned. She sent off the slave and filled two glasses with the loveliest white hand, and such a diamond on it! She began drinking to me, and of course I did the same to her. 'Here's to our next merry meeting,' said she. My blood ran a little cold at that, but I finished my liquor. It was no use flying a white feather; so says I, 'Here's to the Corsair's bride.' Her eyes twinkled, but she made me a civil courtesy.

"'That's prime Madeira,' says I.

"She said yes; it had been their companion in several cruises.

"'It runs through a fellow like oil,' says I.

"'Then have some more?' said she.

"So I did, and then she did not say any more, and the 'Malignant' sat mum-chance: and I was pumped dry and quite at a loss. So, not to look like a fool, I — asked 'em to breakfast."

"What! Who?"

"Why, the lady and gentleman: I mean the 'Malignant' and the 'Corsair's bride.'"

"Young madman!"

"Why, what harm could that do, captain?"

"What good could it do? What did they say?"

"She said, 'Are there any ladies aboard?'"

"I said, 'Yes, and tip-top fashionable ones.'"

"So then she looked at the 'Malignant,' and he never moved a muscle. So then she said, 'We will do ourselves the pleasure — *if we are in company*,' and she smiled ever so knowingly, did that beautiful demon.

"Then I pretended cheerful. 'That is all right,' said I. 'Mind, I shall tell the ladies, and they will be awfully disappointed if you don't come.'

"'I assure you,' says she, 'we will come — *if we are in company*. I give you my hand on it,' says she, and she put out her hand. It was lovely and white, but I looked at it as if 'twas the devil's claw; but I had to take it or walk the plank; so I did take it, and — oh Lord, would you believe it? — she gave mine such a squeeze!"

Lewis. Gammon!

Castor. I tell you she gave my flipper the most delicious squeeze you ever — it was so long, and soft, and gentle.

Curtis. But what was it for?

Castor. At the time I thought it was to encourage me: for she said, ever so softly, "You are a brave man." But more likely it was to delude me and put me off my guard. Well, I was for sheering off after that, and I made a low bow to the "Malignant." He never got up, but he showed his little bit o' breeding, took the snake-pipe out of his mouth, and brought his head slowly down, an inch a minute, till he looked like pitch-poling over on to the floor and cutting a somersault; and, while he was going down and up again, the lady said, "You had better wait a minute." It was in a very particular way she said it; and she flew to a telegraph, and her white hands went clicking at an awful rate; and I cannot get it out of my head that if those white hands hadn't worked those wires, I should have been cut in pieces at the cabin door. Not that I cared so very much for that. *I had my little plan.* However, she left off clicking just as that old picture got his figure-head above his bows again; so I made my bow to 'em both, and sheered off; and blest if that elderly officer does not meet me at the door, and

march before me to the quarter-deck; and there's another officer hailing my boat; and there were fine scarlet silk side-ropes fixed, and two men standing by them. So I came away in state. But I'm no wiser than I went. Whether it is an Eastern prince out on pleasure, or a first-class pirate, I don't know. I hope you will order a tip-top breakfast, captain, for the honor of the ship; lobster curry, for one thing; and sharpen cutlasses and clean small-arms, and borrow all Mr. Greaves's revolvers; he is taking out quite a cargo of 'em: and that reminds me I forgot to tell you what my little plan was that made me so saucy. I borrowed one of Greaves's six-shooters — here it is — and at the first sign of treachery I wasn't going to waste powder, but just cut back and kill the "Malignant" and the "Corsair's bride;" for I argued they wouldn't have a successor ready, and ten to one they would have a quarrel who was to take the command; so that would save our hooker at the expense of one hand, and him a bachelor. Nobody minds a bachelor getting snuffed out.

Upon Mr. Castor revealing his little plan, the other officers insisted on shaking hands with him. At which he stared, but consented heartily; and finding himself in such unexpected favor, repeated his advice. "Prepare an excellent breakfast for to-morrow, and grind cutlasses, and load the guns with grape, and get all the small-arms loaded, especially revolvers; for," said Castor, "I *think* they mean to board us to-night, cut all our throats, ravish the women, and scuttle the craft, when they have rifled her; but if they don't, I'm *sure* they will come to breakfast. She gave me her hand on that, and the turbaned Turk nodded his thundering old piratical figure-head."

The other officers agreed with him that the ship would probably be attacked that night, and all possible prepa-

rations were made for her defence. They barred the ports on the main deck, charged the cannon with grape, armed the Lascars with cutlasses, and the white men with muskets as well, and the officers and the boatswain with cutlasses and revolvers.

The sun set, and all was now grim expectation and anxiety. No watch was called, for the whole crew was the watch.

The moon came out, and showed the cutter, like a black snake, lying abominably near.

Hour after hour dragged by in chill suspense. Each bell, as it was struck, rung like a solemn knell.

Midnight came and passed. Morning approached.

The best time for attacking seemed to have passed.

Fears began to lessen — hopes to glow.

The elastic Castor began to transfer his whole anxiety to the cook and his mate, standing firm to his theory that the Corsair and his bride would come to breakfast if they did not attack the ship that night. The captain pooh-poohed this; and indeed Castor persuaded nobody but the cook. Him he so flattered about his fish patties and lobster curries, etc., that he believed anything.

Day broke, and the ship's company and officers breathed freely. Some turned in. But still the schooner was closely watched by many eyes and deck glasses, and keenly suspected.

Soon after eight bells there was a movement on board the schooner, and this was immediately reported by Mr. Castor, then in charge of the ship, to Captain Curtis. He came on deck directly.

"You are right, sir," said he, handling his glass, "and they are lowering a boat. He is coming. And, by Jove, they are rigging a whip! There's a lady. Mr. Castor, rig a whip on the main-yard. Bear a hand there, forward.

Bosen, attend the side. Here, sling this chair. Smart now! — they are shoving off.”

Six able oarsmen brought the Corsair and his bride, with race-horse speed, from the schooner to the ship.

But there were smart fellows on board the *Phœbe* too. There was a shrill wind of the boatswain’s pipe-call, the side was promptly manned, the chair lowered into the schooner’s boat as she came alongside, and gently hoisted, with the lady in it, and she was landed on the deck of the *Phœbe*.

She had a thick veil on.

The commander of the schooner drew up beside her, and Captain Curtis came forward, and the two commanders off hats and bowed.

The captain of the schooner was now gorgeous in a beautiful light-blue uniform, the cloth glossy as velvet and heavy with silver, as was also his cap.

The captain led the way to the cabin. His guests followed. The ladies were duly informed, and dropped in one after another. Then the Corsair’s bride removed her veil, and revealed a truly beautiful woman, in the prime of youth, with a divine complexion, and eyes almost purple, so deep was their blue.

Captain Curtis seated this dazzling creature to his right, and, to the surprise of the company, her companion immediately seated himself on her other side. The ladies looked at each other and smiled, as much as to say, “He is jealous — and no great wonder.” However, they talked to her across the body of her lord, and she to them, and she was a most piquant addition to the table, and full of spirit. She seemed devoted to her companion.

For all that she had a letter in her pocket, which she intended to confide to one of those ladies she had never seen before in all her life; and she was now quietly

examining their faces and judging their voices, as she conversed with them, merely to make the best selection of a confidante she could.

The breakfast did honor to the ship, and the Corsair praised the lobster curry, and made himself very agreeable all round.

Presently one of the ladies said to Mr. Castor, "But where is Mr. Greaves?" Castor told her he had been disabled by a shot a lubberly gunner had dropped on his foot, and was confined to his cabin.

"Oh, dear," said the lady; "poor Mr. Greaves! How unlucky he is!"

"Is it one of your officers?" asked the strange lady quietly.

"No, ma'am, he is a Queen's officer, lieutenant of the Centaur, going out with us as passenger."

Then the lady changed color, but said nothing, and speedily turned the conversation; but the Corsair looked black as thunder, and became rather silent all of a sudden.

The ladies rose, and invited the fair stranger to go with them.

"Please excuse her," said the Corsair, in a civil but commanding tone.

She seemed indifferent.

Soon after this an officer came in, and said, joyfully, "Wind from the *nor'-west*."

"Ah!" said the stranger; "then we must leave you, sir. Come on deck, dear."

When they got on deck the lady said, rather pettishly, "Wind? I feel no wind." Thereupon Mr. Castor pointed out to her a dark blue line, about eight miles off, on the pale blue water.

"Oh," said she, "that is wind, is it?"

"Yes, ma'am, and a good breeze too; it will be here in

twenty minutes. Why, your boat is gone ! Never mind, we will take you."

"By all means," said she, aloud ; then, as she turned from him, she said, in a swift whisper, "Sit near me in the boat ; I've something for you."

Now this conversation passed at the head of the companion-ladder, and Greaves heard the lady's voice, though not the words. He started violently, huddled on his clothes, and would have hobbled on deck ; but the boat was brought alongside in full view from the port window of his cabin. He heard her grate the ship's side, and opened the window just as the lady was lowered into the boat. The chair was hoisted. The lady, with her veil down as she had come, took her seat on the stern thwart beside her companion, Castor sitting at the helm.

"Shove off !" was the word.

Then, as they turned the boat's head round, the lady, who had seen Greaves through her veil, and had time to recognize him in spite of his beard, lifted her veil for one moment, and showed him the face of Ellen Ap Rice — that face he had loved so well, and suffered so cruelly for loving it. That face was now pale and eloquent beyond the power of words. There was self-reproach, a prayer for forgiveness, and, stranger still, a prayer to that injured friend — *for help*.

PART III.

THE boat proceeded on her way. Ellen pointed to windward and said, "See, Edward, the dark line is ever so much nearer us."

Laxton turned his head to windward directly, and some remarks passed between him and Castor.

Ellen had counted on this; she availed herself of it to whip a letter out of her pocket, and write in pencil an address upon the envelope. This she did under a shawl upon her lap. Then she kept quiet and waited an opportunity to do something more dangerous.

But none came; Laxton sat square with her, and could see every open movement of her hand.

They were within ten yards of the schooner, and the side manned to receive them.

Just then Laxton stood up and cried out, "Forward there! Stand by to loose the jib."

The moment he stood up, Mrs. Laxton whipped the letter out from under her shawl and held it by her left side, but a little behind her, where nobody could see it except Castor. She shook it in her fingers very eloquently to make that officer observe it; then she leaned a little back and held it toward him, but, with female adroitness, turned it outward in her hand, so that not one of the many eyes in the boat could see it.

A moment of agony, and then she felt fingers much larger and harder than hers take it quietly and convey it stealthily away. Her panting bosom relieved itself of a sigh.

"What is the matter?" said the watchful Laxton.

"The matter? Nothing," said she.

"I hope," said he, "you are not sorry to return to our humble craft."

"I have seen none to compare with her," said she, fencing boldly, but trembling to herself.

The next moment she was on board the schooner, and waited to see the boat off, and also to learn, if possible, whether Castor had her letter all safe, and would take it to its address.

To her consternation she heard Laxton invite Castor to come on board a moment.

She tried to catch Castor's eye, and warn him to do nothing of the kind.

But the light-hearted officer assented at once, and was on the quarter-deck next moment.

Laxton waved the others to fall back; but Ellen would not leave them together: she was too apprehensive, knowing what she had just done.

"I have not the honor of knowing your name, sir; mine is Edward Laxton."

"Mine is Dick Castor, sir, at your service — and yours, ma'am." And he took this fair opportunity, and gave Ellen a look that made her cheeks burn, for it said plainly, "Your letter is in safe hands."

"Well, Mr. Castor," said Laxton, "you are the sort I want on board this schooner; you are a man of nerve. Now I have never had a sailing-master yet, because I don't need one — I am an enthusiast in navigation, have studied it for years, theoretically and practically — but I want a first lieutenant, a man with nerve. What do you say, now? Five hundred a year, and a swell uniform."

"Well, sir, the duds don't tempt me; but the pay is very handsome, and the craft is a beauty."

Laxton bowed ceremoniously. "Let me add," said he, gravely, "that she is the forerunner of many such vessels. At present, I believe, she is the only armed yacht afloat; but, looking at the aspect of Europe, we may reasonably

hope some nice little war or other will spring up: then the Rover can play an honorable and, indeed, a lucrative part. My first lieutenant's prize-money will not be less, I should imagine, than twenty thousand a year; an agreeable addition to his pay, sir."

"Delightful!" said Castor. "But they sometimes hang a privateer at the yard-arm; so I should be quite contented with my little five hundred and peaceful times."

"Well, then, tell 'em to sheer off, and fetch your traps."

"Yes, do, Mr. Castor," said Ellen. "You can send a line to explain." That was to get her own letter delivered, the sly thing.

Castor shook his head. "Sorry to disoblige you, ma'am, and to refuse you, sir; but things can't be done that way. A seaman must not desert his ship on her voyage. Catch me in port and make the same offer, I'll jump mast-high at it."

"Well," said Laxton, "what port are you to be caught in?"

"Why, it must be London or Hong-Kong. I shall be three months at Hong-Kong."

Laxton said he had not intended to cruise so far west as that, but he would take a note of it. "You are worth going a little out of the way for," said he.

While he was making his note, "bang" went a gun from the Phoebe, and she was seen hoisting sail with great rapidity; her rigging swarmed with men.

"There, that's for us," said Castor.

"No hurry, sir," said Laxton; "he is going to tack instead of veering; she'll hang in the wind for half an hour. Forward there—hoist the flying-jib and the foretopsel. Helm aweather! Veer the ship. Mr. Castor, bid your men hold on. We must not part without a friendly glass."

"Oh, no," said Ellen. "I will order it."

Some of the prime Madeira was immediately brought on deck; and, while they were all three drinking to each other, the impatient Phœbe fired another gun. But Castor took it coolly; he knew Laxton was right, and the ship could not come round on the port tack in a hurry. He drank his second glass, shook hands with Laxton, and then with Mrs. Laxton, received once more an eloquent pressure of her soft hand, and this time returned it to give her confidence, and looked courage into her eyes, that met his anxiously. Then he put off; and though the Phœbe was now nearly a mile off, he easily ran alongside her before she paid off and got her head before the wind.

His mind was in a troubled state. He was dying to know what this lovely woman, who had fallen in love with him so suddenly, had written to him. But he would not open it right in sight of the schooner, and so many eyes. He was a very loyal fellow.

At a good distance he took it carefully out, and his countenance fell; for the letter was sealed and addressed:

"LIEUT. GREAVES, R.N."

Here was a disappointment, and a blow to the little amorous romance which Mr. Castor, who, among his other good qualities, was inflammable as tinder, had been constructing ever since the Corsair's bride first drank to him and pressed his hand.

He made a terribly wry face, looking at the letter: but he said to himself, with a little grunt, "Well, there's nothing lost that a friend gets."

As soon as he had boarded the Phœbe, and seen the boat replaced on the davits, the good-natured fellow ran down to Greaves's cabin and found him sitting dejected, with his head down.

"Cheer up, Mr. Greaves," cries Castor; "luck is changed. Here is a fair wind, and every rag set, and the loveliest woman I ever clapped eyes on has been and written you a letter, and there it is."

"It is from *her!*" cried Greaves, and began to open it all in a tremble. "She is in trouble, Castor—I saw it in her face."

"Trouble! not she. Schooner A 1, and money in both pockets."

"Trouble, I tell you, and great trouble, or she would never have written to me." By this time he had opened the letter and was busied in the contents. "It wasn't to me she wrote," he sighed. "How could it be?" He read it through and then handed it to Castor.

The letter ran thus:—

"I have written this in hopes I may be able to give it to some lady on board the *Phœbe* or to one of the officers, and that something may be done to rescue me, and prevent some terrible misfortune.

"My husband is a madman! It is his mania to pass for a pirate and frighten unarmed vessels. Only last week we fell in with a Dutch brig, and he hoisted a black flag with a white death's-head and cross-bones, and fired a shot across the Dutchman's bows. The Dutchman hove to directly, but took to his boats. Then Mr. Laxton thought he had done enough, so he fired a gun to leeward in token of amity; but the poor Dutchman did not understand, and the crew pulled their boats toward Java Head, full ten miles off, and abandoned their ship. I told him it was too cruel; but he spoke quite harshly to me, and said that lubbers who didn't know the meaning of a gun to leeward had no business afloat. All I could persuade him to was to sail quite away, and let the poor Dutchmen see they could come back to their ship. She could not fly from them, because she was hove to.

"He tried this experiment on the *Phœbe*, and got the men to join him in it. He told me every word I was to say to the officer. The three who were put in irons had a guinea

apiece for it and double grog. He only left off because the officer who came on board was such a brave man and won his respect directly; for he is as brave as a lion himself. And that is the worst of it; if a frigate caught him playing the pirate and fired at him, he would be sure to fire back and court destruction.

“His very crew are so attached to him, and so highly paid—for he is extremely rich—and sailors are so reckless, that I am afraid they would fight almost anybody at a distance. But I think if they saw an officer on board in his uniform, and he spoke to them, they would come to their senses, because they are many of them men-of-war’s men. But, indeed, I fear he bribed some of them out of the Queen’s ships; and I don’t know what those men might not do, because they are deserters.

“It is my hope and prayer that the captain and officers of the Phœbe will, all of them, tell a great many other captains—especially of armed vessels—not to take the Rover for a real pirate and fire on him, but to come on board and put him under reasonable restraint, for his own sake and that of others at sea.

“As for myself, I believe my own life is hardly safe. He has fits of violence which he cannot help, poor fellow, and is very sorry for afterward; but they are becoming more frequent, and he is getting worse in every way.

“But it is not for myself I write these lines, so much as to prevent wholesale mischief. I behaved ill in marrying him, and must take my chance, and perhaps pay my penalty.

“ELLEN LAXTON.”

“Well, Castor,” said Greaves eagerly, “what shall we do? Will the captain let you take volunteers and board her?”

“Certainly not! Why, here’s a fair wind, and stunsels set to catch every puff.”

“For heaven’s sake take him her letter and try him!”

“I’ll do that; but it is no use.”

He took the letter, and soon came back with a reply that Captain Curtis sympathized with the lady, and

would make the case known to every master in his service.

"And that is all he is game for!" said Greaves contemptuously. "Castor, lend me your arm; I can hobble on deck well enough."

He got on deck, and the schooner was three miles to leeward and full a mile astern, with nothing set but her topsails and flying jib.

Greaves groaned aloud. "He means to part company; we shall never see her again." He groaned and went down to his cabin again.

He was mistaken. Laxton was only giving the ship a start in order to try rates of sailing. He set his magnificent mainsail and foresail and mainjib, and came up with the ship hand over head, the moderate breeze giving him an advantage.

Castor did not tell Greaves, for he thought it would only put him in a passion and do no good.

So the first intimation Greaves got was at about 4 P.M. He was seated in deep sorrow copying his lost sweetheart's letter, in order to carry out her wishes, when the shadow of an enormous jibsail fell on his paper. He looked up, and saw the schooner gliding majestically alongside, within pistol-shot.

He flew on deck, in spite of his lame foot, and made the wildest propositions. He wanted a broadside fired at the schooner's masts to disable her; wanted Captain Curtis to take the wind out of her sails and run on to her, grapple her and board her.

To all this, as might be supposed, Captain Curtis turned a deaf ear.

"Interfere with violence between man and wife, sir! Do you think I am as mad as he is? Attack a commander who has just breakfasted with me, merely because he has got a tile loose! Pray compose yourself,

Mr. Greaves, and don't talk nonsense. I shall keep my course and take no notice of his capers. And, Mr. Greaves, I am sorry for you: you are out of luck — but every dog has his day. Be patient, man, for God's sake! and remember you serve Her Majesty, and should be the last to defy the law. You should set an example, sir."

This brought that excellent officer to his bearings, and he sat down all of a heap and was silent, but tears of agony came out of his eyes; and presently something occurred that made him start up in fury again.

For Laxton's quick eye had noticed him and his wild appeals, and he sent down for Mrs. Laxton. When she came up he said, "My dear, there's a gentleman on deck who did not breakfast with us. There he sits, abaft the mainmast, looking daggers at us. Do you know him?"

Ellen started.

"Ah, you do know him. Tell me his name."

"His name is Arthur Greaves."

"What, the same that was spoony on you when I sailed into Tenby Harbor?"

"Yes, yes. Pray, spare me the sight of the man I wronged so wickedly."

"Spare you the sight, you lying devil! Why, you raised your veil to see him the better." With these words he caught her hastily round the waist with his powerful arm, and held her in that affectionate position while he made his ironical adieus to the ship he was outsailing.

During the above dialogue, the schooner being directly under the ship's lee, the wind was taken out of the swifter craft's sails, and the two vessels hung together a minute; but soon the schooner forged ahead, and glided gradually away, steering a more southerly course; and still those two figures were seen interlaced upon her deck, in spite of the lady's letter in Greaves's possession.

"The hell of impotence," says an old writer. Poor Greaves suffered that hell all the time the schooner ran alongside the ship, and nobody would help him board her, or grapple her, or sink her. Then was added the hell of jealousy; his eyes were blasted and his soul sickened with the actual picture of his old sweetheart embraced by her lord and master before all the world. He had her letter, addressed (though not written) to him; but Laxton had *her*, and the picture of possession was public. Greaves shook his fist at him with impotent fury, howled impotent curses at him, that everybody heard, even the ladies, who had come on deck well pleased, seeing only the surface of things, and were all aghast when Greaves came up all of a sudden, and stormed and raged at what to them was that pretty ship and justly affectionate commander; still more aghast when all this torrent came to a climax, and the strong man fell down in a fit, and was carried, gnashing and foaming and insensible, to his cabin.

On board the schooner all was not so rosy as it looked. Mrs. Laxton, quietly imprisoned by an iron hand, and forced into a pictorial attitude of affection quite out of character with her real sentiments — which at that moment were fear, repugnance, remorse, and shame — quivered and writhed in that velvet-iron embrace: her cheeks were red, at first, with burning blushes; but by degrees they became very pale; her lips quivered, and lost all color; and, soon after Greaves was carried below, her body began to collapse, and at last she was evidently about to faint; but her changeable husband looked in her face, uttered a cry of dismay, and supported her, with a world of tenderness, into the cabin, and laying her on a sofa, recovered her with all the usual expedients, and then soothed her with the tenderest expressions of solicitude and devotion.



Mrs. Laxton came in



It was not the first time his tyranny had ended in adoration and tenderness. The couple had shed many tears of reconciliation; but the finest fabric wears out in time; and the blessed shade of Lord Byron must forgive me if I declare that even "Pique her and soothe by turns" may lose its charm by what Shakespeare calls, "damnable iteration." The reader, indeed, might gather as much from Mrs. Laxton's reply to her husband's gushing tenderness. "There — there — I know you love me — in your way; and, if you do, please leave me in peace, for I am quite worn out."

"Queen of my soul, your lightest word is a command," said the now chivalrous spouse; impressed a delicate kiss upon her brow, and retired backward with a gaze of veneration, as from the presence of his sovereign.

This sentiment of excessive veneration did not, however, last twenty-four hours. He thought the matter over, and early next morning he brought a paint-pot into the cabin, and having stirred some of his wife's mille-fleur into it proceeded to draw and then paint a certain word over a small cupboard or locker in the state cabin.

Mrs. Laxton came in, and found him so employed. "What a horrid smell!" said she pettishly. "Paint!"

"What, do you smell it?" said he, in a humble, apologetic tone. "I thought I had succeeded in disguising it with something more agreeable to the nostrils of beauty — the essence of a thousand flowers."

"You have not, then; and what *are* you doing?"

"Painting a word on this locker. A salutary word. Behold, queen of this ship and your husband's heart!" and he showed her the word "Discipline" beautifully written in large letters and in an arch.

She began to quake a little; but being high-spirited, she said, "Yes, it is a salutary word, and if it had been

applied to you when a boy, it would be all the better for you now — and for me too.”

“It would,” said he gravely. “But *I* had no true friend to correct the little faults of youth. You have. You have a husband, who knows how to sail a woman. ‘*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re,*’ that’s the rule, when one is blessed, and honored, and tormented with the charge of capricious beauty.”

Then Mrs. Laxton took fright, and said, cajolingly, she really believed he was the wisest man upon the seas.

As he was, at all events, one of the vainest, this so gratified him that no further allusion to her faults was made that day.

The next morning two sailors had a fight for the affections of Susan Tucker, Mrs. Laxton’s Welsh maid, whom he had made her color and rig out as Zulema, in that little comedy of *Castor*.

Thereupon Laxton complained to her, and said, “I cannot have the peace of the vessel disturbed by that hussy. I shall discharge her.”

“What, into the sea, dear?” said Mrs. Laxton, rather pertly.

“No, love. Though I don’t see why I shouldn’t launch her in an open boat, with a compass, and a loaf, and a barrel of water, and a bottle of hair-oil — she uses that, the nasty little pig. That sort of thing has been done, on less provocation, to Captain Blyth, and many others. No, I shall fire across the bows of the first homeward-bound” —

Mrs. Laxton uttered a loud sigh of dismay.

“And send that little apple of discord back to its own orchard in South Wales — he! he! he!”

This was no laughing matter to poor Mrs. Laxton. She clasped her hands. “Oh, Edward, show me some

mercy! I have never been without a woman about me. Oh, pray don't let me be alone in a ship, surrounded by men, and not one woman!"

"For shame, Ellen!" said he severely. "You are a pirate's bride, and must rise above your sex. I devote myself to your service as lady's-maid. It would be odd indeed if a man who can pass a weather earring, couldn't humble-cum-stumble a woman's stays."

"That is not it. If she goes, my life will not be safe."

"Not safe! with me to look after it?"

"No, you villain! you hypocrite! If she goes, my life will not be safe from *you*." She was wild with anger and fear.

"These are hard words," said he sorrowfully. Then, firmly, "I see the time has come for discipline;" and though his words were wondrous calm, he seized her suddenly by the nape of the neck. She uttered one scream; the next he stopped with his other hand, and she bit it to the bone, but he never winced. "Come," said he, "I'll use no unnecessary violence. 'Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re,' is the sailing order;" and in a few moments she was bundled, struggling violently, into the locker, and the key turned on her.

Though his hand bled freely he kept his word, and used no unnecessary violence, provided you grant him, by way of postulate, that it was *necessary* to put her into that locker at all. Only, as she fought and bit and scratched and kicked and wriggled her very best, the necessary violence was considerable.

That was her fault, not his, he conceived. He used no unnecessary violence. He now got a napkin and tied up his hand. Then he took a centre-bit and bored holes in the panelled door.

This, he informed his prisoner, was necessary. "With-

out a constant supply of fresh air you would be uncomfortable ; and your comfort is very dear to me."

He then remarked that she ought to have a sentinel. Respect, as well as safe custody, demanded that ; and, as he was his own factotum, he would discharge that function. Accordingly, he marched past the locker, to and fro, without ceasing, till there was a knock at his cabin door, and a sail reported to leeward.

"Homeward bound ?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then close up with her, and get my gig ready to board her."

When he came near her, it proved to be one of Mr. Green's tea ships ; so he fired a gun to leeward, instead of sending a shot across her bows ; and then he launched his gig, with Susan blubbing in the stern-sheets, and her clothes in a hammock.

The ship, for a wonder, condescended to slack her main-sheet, and the boat, being very swift, ran up to her astern, and the officer in command of the boat offered forty pounds for a passenger.

They happened to want a female servant, and so they took her, with a little grumbling ; and she got her fare, or the greater portion of it, paid her for wages at Southampton. So I am told, however.

The pursuit and capture of the ship, and the hoisting on board of Susan, were all reported, during their actual progress, with great bonhomie, to Mrs. Laxton, through her air-holes, by her spouse and sentinel, and received with sobbing and sullen tears.

When the boat came back, Laxton put on a bright and cheerful air. "There," said he to his prisoner, "the bone of contention is gone, and peace is restored—nautical peace and domestic peace. Aren't you glad ?"

No answer.

"Don't be sulky, dear. That shows a bad disposition, and calls for discipline. Open your mind to me. This is the cellular system, universally approved. How do you find it work? How do you feel, love? A little — subjugated — eh? Tell the truth now."

"Yes; quite subjugated," said a faint voice. "Pray let me out."

"With pleasure, dear. Why did you not ask me before?"

He opened the door, and there was the poor woman, crouched in a cupboard that only just held her, seated on the ground with her knees half-way to her chin. She came out with her eyes as wild as any beast of the forest that had been caught in a trap, and tottered to a seat. She ran her white hands recklessly into her hair and rocked herself. "Oh, my God!" she cried. "Susan gone; and I am alone with a madman! I'm a lost woman!"

Laxton pitied her distress, and set himself to cool her fears. "Don't talk like that, dearest," said he; "a little discipline is wholesome. What have you to fear from a man whose sportive ensign, no doubt, is a death's-head and cross-bones? but his motto is 'Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.' Look here; here is an ensanguined cloth. Mine is the only blood that has been shed in our little loving encounter; the only blood that ever shall be shed between us, sweet tigress of my soul."

"Forgive me!" said she, trembling all over — "I was so frightened."

"Forgive you, dearest! Why, you know a bite from you is sweeter to me than a kiss from any other woman. It was rapturous. Bite me again, love; scratch me; beat me. Sweet, darling Nelly, teach a brute and ruffian to dare to discipline his lovely queen."

"No, no; I won't touch you. You don't love me."

"Not love you? Ah, cruel Nelly! What man ever loved a woman as I love you?"

"Give me a proof—some better proof than locking me up in that horrid hole."

"Any proof you like."

"Take me on shore. I'm not a sailor; and I begin to pine for the land."

"Of course you do," said Laxton, who was now all indulgence. "Choose your land at once. There's Australia to leeward."

"Yes, six thousand miles. Let us go to China, and drink tea together, dear, fresh gathered."

"The desire is natural," said Laxton, like a nurse making life sweet to a refractory child. "I'll go on deck and alter her course directly. By the by, where did that Castor say I should find him?"

Thus, even in her deplorable condition, and just let out of prison, did a terrified but masterly woman manipulate her maniac.

But what she endured in the course of a very few days was enough to unhinge a lady for life. Laxton took to brooding, and often passed his hand over his brow with a weird, terrified look. Then she watched him with terror. On deck he went into furies about the most trifling things, and threatened his best seamen with the cat.

Ellen could hear his voice raging above, and sat trembling as his step came down the ladder after these explosions. But at the cabin door he deposited violence, and his mania took another turn. He disciplined her every day, and it seemed to cool him. She made no resistance, and they conversed amicably on different sides of the prison, she admitting that discipline was good for her mind.

After a time she would say, "Edward, I'm sorry to say this contracted position pains my limbs."

"We must provide for that. I'll build another yacht, with more room in it — for *everything*."

"Do, dear; and, meantime, I am afraid I must ask you to let me out."

"Oh, by all means. Everything must give way to your comfort."

Unfortunately, Mr. Laxton, as his reason became weaker, set up a spy; and this fellow wormed out that one of the crew had seen Castor take a letter on the sly from Mrs. Laxton. This upset his mind altogether. He burst in upon her, looking fearful. "So you write love-letters to strangers, do you?" he roared.

"No, no! Who dares say so?"

"Who dares deny it? You were seen to give one to that Castor, a man you had only spoken to once, you false-hearted, adulterous hussy!"

"It was only a letter to my father."

"Liar! it was a love-letter. And that Greaves couldn't show his face but you must unveil to him. Damnation! There, you are driving me mad! But you shall not escape, nor your paramours elect. I know where to find *them*; and *you* I've got."

The poor creature began to shiver. "I am full of faults," she whimpered. "Discipline me, dear. You will mend me in time."

"No, Judas!" roared the madman. "I have disciplined you in vain. Discipline! it is wasted on such a character. I must try *extinction*."

"What, would you kill me, Edward?"

"Dead as a herring."

"God have mercy on me!"

"That's *his* affair; *mine* is to see that you deceive and delude no more able navigators, and drive them mad. But don't you think I'm going to shed your blood. I'm too fond of you, traitress — viper — hussy — demon of

deceit! And don't you think you shall die alone. No. You shall perish with your Castor and your Greaves, cursed triumvirate. I know where to find them both. This very day I'll catch them, and lash them to the furniture, scuttle my beloved schooner and set the water bubbling slowly up till it sucks you all three down to the bottom. Sit down on that ottoman, if you please, loveliest and wickedest of all God's creatures."

"I will not. I will scream if you lay a hand on me."

"In that case," said he, "you will drive me to a thing I detest, and that is violence." And he drew out a revolver.

Then she put up her quivering hands, and, pale and quaking in every limb, submitted. She sat down on the ottoman, and he produced some gold cord and fine silk cord. With the silk he tied her hair most artistically to the table, and with the gold cord he bound her hands behind her back, and reduced her to utter helplessness. This done with great care and dexterity, he bade her observe, with a sneer, that his revolver was not loaded. He loaded it and another before her eyes, put them in his pocket, locked the cabin, and went on deck, leaving her more dead than alive.

PART IV.

ALL this time the schooner had been running thirteen knots an hour before a south-west breeze, and Laxton soon saw a port under his lee, with many ships at anchor. The sight fired his poor brain; he unfurled two black pennants with a white head and cross-bones, one at each of his mast-heads, and flew a similar ensign at his main peak, and so stood in for the anchorage, like a black kite swooping into a poultry-yard.

Greaves soon came to from his fit; but he had a rack-ing pain across the brow, and the doctor dreaded brain-fever. However, a violent bleeding relieved the sufferer, and Nature, relenting, sent this much-enduring man a long, heavy sleep, whence he awoke with an even pulse, but fell into a sullen, dogged state of mind, sustained only by some vague and not very reasonable hope of vengeance.

But now the ladies interfered; from one to another they had picked up some of his story. He was the one hero of romance in the ship; and his ill-luck, bodily and mental, before their eyes, their hearts melted with pity, and they came to the rescue. However timid a single lady may be, four can find courage when acting in concert. They visited him in his cabin in pairs; they made him in one day, by division of labor, a fine cloth shoe for his bad foot; they petted him, and poured consolation on him; and one of them, Mrs. General Meredith, who had a mellow, sympathetic voice, after beating coily about the bush a bit, wormed his whole story out of him, and instantly told it to the others, and they were quite happy the rest of the voyage, having a real live love story to talk over. Mrs. Meredith gave him her address at Hong-Kong, and made him promise to call on her.

At last they reached that port, and the passengers dispersed. Greaves went on board the *Centaur*, and was heartily welcomed.

He reported his arrival to the admiral, and fell at once into the routine of duty. He intended to confide in his good-natured friend the second mate, but was deterred by hearing that a new steam-corvette was about to be despatched to the island to look after pirates. She was to be ready in less than a month.

Nothing was more likely than that the admiral would

give the command to his flag-lieutenant: indeed, the chances were five to one. So Greaves said to himself, "I'll hold my tongue about that madman, and then if I have the good-luck to fall in with him, I can pretend to take him for a pirate, and board him, and rescue her."

So he held his tongue, and in due course it was notified to him that he was to command the corvette as soon as her armament should be complete.

It did not escape Lieutenant Greaves that the mad cruiser might be cruising in Polynesia while he was groping the Chinese islands with his corvette. Still there was a chance; and as it seemed the only one, his sad heart clung to it. In England, time and a serious malady had closed his wound; but the sight of Ellen's face, pale and unhappy, and the possession of her letter, which proved that she feared her husband more than she loved him, had opened his wound again, and renewed all his love and all his pain.

But while he was waiting and sickening with impatience at the delays in fitting out his corvette for service, an incident occurred that struck all his plans aside in a moment, and taught him how impossible it is for a man to foresee what a single day may bring forth.

Admiral Hervey was on the quarter-deck of the Centaur, and a group of his officers conversing to leeward of him, at a respectful distance, when suddenly a schooner, making for the port, hoisted a black flag with death's-head and cross-bones at her mast-heads and her main-peak, and came bowling in. She steered right for the Centaur, just shaved her stern, ran on about a cable's length, hove up in the wind, and anchored between the flagship and the port she was watching.

It really looked as if this comic pirate meant to pour

his little broadside into the mighty Centaur, and get blown out of the water in a moment.

Then Greaves began to ask himself whether he was right not to tell the admiral all about this vessel. But while he hesitated that worthy did not. He grinned at the absurdity of the thing, but he frowned at the impudence. "This won't do," he said. Then, turning toward his officers, "Lieutenant Greaves!"

"Sir."

"Take an armed party, and bring the master of that schooner to me."

"Ay, sir."

In a very few minutes Lieutenant Greaves, with two boats containing armed sailors and marines, and the union-jack flying, put off from the Centaur and boarded the schooner.

At sight of his cocked hat the schooner's men slunk forward and abandoned their commander. He sat aft on a barrel of gunpowder, a revolver in each hand, and vociferated.

Greaves stepped up and fixed his eye on him. He was raving mad and dangerous. Greaves ordered two stout fellows to go round him while he advanced. Then, still fixing his eye on the maniac, he so mesmerized him that he did not notice the other assailants. In one moment they pinned him behind, and Greaves bounded on him like a cat. Bang! bang! went two shots ploughing the deck, and Laxton was secured and tied, and bundled, shrieking, cursing, and foaming, on board one of the boats, and taken to the flagship.

Meantime, Greaves stepped forward and said a few words to the men: "Now then, Jack, do you want to get into trouble?"

The men's caps went off in a moment. "No, your honor; it ain't our fault."

"Then strike those ridiculous colors, and fly your union-jack at the main-peak; this schooner is under royal command for the present."

"Ay, ay, sir."

This was done in a moment, and meantime Greaves ran down the companion-ladder, and knocked at the cabin-door.

No answer.

Knocked again, and listened.

He heard a faint moan.

He drew back as far as he could, ran furiously at the door, and gave it such a tremendous kick with his sound foot that the lock gave way and the door burst open.

Then the scared Ellen saw a cocked hat in the doorway, and the next moment her old lover was by her side, untying her hair, and cutting the ligatures carefully, with tender ejaculations of pity.

"Oh, Arthur!" she sobbed. "Ah! go away — he will kill us both!"

"No, no; don't you be frightened. He is under arrest; and I command the schooner, by the admiral's orders. Don't tremble so, darling; it is all over. Why, you are under the guns of the flagship, and you have got me. Oh, my poor Ellen! did ever I think to see you used like this?"

So then they had a cry together; and he said everything in the world to comfort her.

But it was not to be done in a moment. The bonds were gone, but the outrage remained. "I want a woman," she cried, and hid her face. "Arthur, bring me a woman."

"That I will," said he; and, seeing paper and envelopes on a table, he dashed off a line to the admiral: —

"Lady on board the schooner in great distress. May I send her ashore to female friends?"

He sent the remaining boat off with this, and the answer came back directly:—

“Act according to your discretion. You can go ashore.”

As soon as he got this he told Mrs. Laxton he would take her to Mrs. General Meredith, or invite that lady on board.

Mrs. Laxton said she felt unable to move; so then Greaves despatched a midshipman in the boat, with a hasty line, and assisted Mrs. Laxton to the sofa, and holding her hand, begged her to dismiss all her fears.

She was too shaken, however, to do that, and sat crying and quivering; she seemed ashamed, too, and humiliated. So this honest fellow, thinking she would perhaps be glad if he left her, placed two marines at her cabin door, to give her confidence, and went on deck and gave some orders, which were promptly obeyed.

But very soon he was sent for to the cabin. “Pray don’t desert me,” said Mrs. Laxton; “the sight of you gives me courage.” After awhile she said, “Ah, you return good for evil.”

“Don’t talk like that,” said he. “Why, I am the happiest fellow afloat now. I got your letter; but I never thought I should be so happy as to rescue you.”

“Happy!” said she. “I shall never be happy again. And I don’t believe you will. Pray don’t forget I am a married woman.”

“I don’t forget that.”

“Married to a madman. I hope no harm will come to him.”

“I will take care no harm comes to *you*.”

Then Greaves, who had read no French novels, and respected the marriage tie, became more distant and respectful, and, to encourage her, said, “Mrs. Laxton, the lady I have sent to admired you on board the ship,

and I am sure, if she gets my letter, she will do more for you than a poor fellow like me can, now you are out of danger. She is a general's wife, and was very kind to me."

"You are very good and thoughtful," said Mrs. Laxton.

Then there was an awkward silence, and it was broken by the arrival of the boat with General Meredith and his wife.

Greaves got them on board the schooner, shook hands with the lady, and proposed to her to see Mrs. Laxton alone.

"You are right," said she.

Greaves showed her to the cabin; and I don't know all that passed, but in a very short time these ladies, who had never met but once, were kissing each other, with wet eyes.

Mrs. Meredith insisted on taking her new friend home with her. Mrs. Laxton acquiesced joyfully; and for once, a basket of lady's clothes was packed in five minutes.

The boat put off again, and Greaves looked sad. So Mrs. Meredith smiled to him, and said, "You know where to find us. Don't be long."

Greaves watched the boat till it was lost among the small shipping, then placed the midshipman in charge, and went at once on board the flagship.

Here he heard that the master of the schooner had been taken on the quarter-deck, and requested, civilly enough, to explain his extraordinary conduct, but had sworn at the admiral, and called him an old woman; whereupon the admiral had not shown any anger, but had said, "Clap him in irons," concluding that was what he expected and desired.

Then this doughty sailor, Greaves, who had been going to kill his rival at sight, etc., was seized with

compunction the moment that rival was powerless. He went boldly to the admiral, and asked leave to give information. He handed him Mrs. Laxton's letter.

"Oh," said the admiral, "then he is mad?"

"As a March hare, sir. And I'm afraid putting him in irons will make him worse. It is a case for a lunatic asylum."

"You won't find one here; but the marine hospital has a ward for lunatics. I know that, for we had to send a foretop-man there last week. I'll give you an order, and you can take him ashore at once."

Then Greaves actually took the poor wretch who had wrecked his happiness, and was now himself a wreck, on board a boat and conveyed him to the hospital, and instructed the manager not to show him any unnecessary severity, but to guard against self-destruction.

Then he went directly to Mrs. Meredith and reported what he had done.

Mrs. Laxton, in spite of all remonstrance, would go and see her husband that night; but she found him in a strait-waistcoat, foaming and furious, and using such language she was obliged to retire horror-stricken.

About five in the morning he burst a blood-vessel in the brain, and at noon next day all his troubles were over.

Mrs. Laxton mourned him, and buried him, and Greaves held aloof, not liking to go near her just now; for he was too frank and simple to pretend he shared her grief. Yet he had sense enough to understand that, at such a time, a generous spirit remembers only a man's good qualities, and Laxton had many; but even when he married Ellen Ap Rice the seeds were in him of that malady which destroyed him at last.

However, if Greaves was out of the widow's sight, he was not out of her mind, for Mrs. Meredith knew his

whole tale, and told her how he had gone to Tenby, and had taken her marriage to heart, and had been at death's door in London.

At last Greaves called, having the excuse of a message from the admiral. He wished to know if Mrs. Laxton would sell eight of her guns to the government, and also allow her sailors to be drafted into his ships, all but two, that number being sufficient to take care of her vessel in port.

Mrs. Laxton said, "I shall do nothing of the kind without *your* advice, Arthur — Mr. Greaves. Why, how am I to get home?"

Then Greaves advised her to sell the guns, for they were worse than useless; but to part with the men only on condition that the admiral would man the schooner, "when required," with new hands that had never played tricks at sea under her late commander.

Greaves called once or twice in the course of this negotiation, and thought Ellen had never looked so lovely as in her widow's cap. But he felt bound to abstain from making love, though he was bursting with it, and both ladies saw it, and pretended not.

But one day he came to them in great dismay, and told them the guns had been bought for the steam-corvette he was to command, and she would be ready in a week, and he should have to go on his cruise. "I am very unfortunate," said he.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when his friend, the second lieutenant, was announced. "Beg pardon, ladies; but here's a letter from the admiral for Greaves; and we all hope it's promotion."

He produced an enormous letter, and, sure enough, Lieutenant Greaves was now a commander. "Hurrah!" shouted the second lieutenant, and retired.

"This would have made me very happy once," said

Greaves; then cast a despairing look at Ellen, and went off all in a hurry, not to break down.

Then Mrs. Laxton had a cry round her friend's neck.

But next day the same Greaves came in all joyous. "I was a fool," said he. "I forgot the rule of the service. An admiral can't have two commanders. That fine fellow, who came after me with the news, is lieutenant in my place, and I'm to go home for orders."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" said Ellen. "When must you go?"

"Oh, I dare say I might stay another fortnight or so. When are you going home, Mrs. Laxton?"

"The very first opportunity; and Mrs. Meredith is to go with me. Won't it be nice?"

"Yes," said he; "but it would be nicer if I could be third man. But no such luck for me, I suppose."

Those two ladies now put their heads together, and boarded the admiral. He knew Mrs. Meredith; but was a little surprised, though too true a tar to be displeased. They were received in his cabin, and opened their business.

Mrs. Laxton wanted to go home immediately in her schooner, and she had no crew.

"Well, madam, you are not to suffer for your civility to us. We will man your schooner for you in forty-eight hours."

"Oh, thank you, admiral! But the worst of it is, I have no one to command her."

"No sailing-master?"

"No; my poor husband sailed her himself."

"Ay, I remember, poor fellow. Besides (looking at the beautiful widow), I would not trust you to a sailing-master."

"What we thought, admiral, was, that as we gave up

the guns and the sailors, perhaps you would be so kind as to lend us an officer."

"What! out of Her Majesty's fleet? I could not do that. But, now I think of it, I've got the very man for you. Here's Commander Greaves, going home on his promotion. He is as good an officer as any on the station."

"Oh, admiral, if *you* think so well of him, he will be a godsend to poor us."

"Well, then, he is at your service, ladies; and you could not do better."

Greaves was a proud and joyful man. "My luck has turned," said he.

He ballasted the schooner and provisioned her at Mrs. Laxton's expense, who had received a large sum of money for her guns. The two ladies occupied the magnificent cabin. He took a humbler berth, weighed anchor, and away for Old England.

I shall not give the reader any nautical details of another voyage, but a brief sketch of things distinct from navigation that happened on board.

Mrs. Laxton was coy for some days; then friendly; then affectionate; and, off the Cape, tyrannical. "You are not the Arthur Greaves I remember," said she; "he had not a horrid beard."

"Why, I suffered for not having one," said he.

"What I mean is," said she, "you do not awaken in me the associations you would but for that—appendage."

"You wish those associations awakened?"

"I don't know. Do you?"

"Indeed I do."

"Then let me see you as you used to be—Arthur."

The beard came off next morning.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Laxton; and, to do her justice, she felt a little compunction at her tyranny, and disposed

to reconcile him to his loss. She was so kind to him that, at Madeira, he asked her to marry him.

"To be sure I will," said she — "some day. Why, I believe we are engaged."

"I am sure of it," said he.

"Then, of course, I *must* marry you. But there's one — little — condition."

"Must I grow a beard again?"

"No. The condition is — I am afraid you won't like it."

"Perhaps not; but I don't care, if I am to be paid by marrying you."

"Well, then, it is — you must leave the service."

"Leave the service! You cannot be serious? What, just when I am on the road to the red flag at the fore! Besides, how are we to live? I have no other means at present, and I am not going to wait for dead men's shoes."

"Papa is rich, *dear*, and I can sell the yacht for a trading vessel. She is worth ten thousand pounds, I'm told."

"Oh, then I am to be idle, and eat my wife's bread?"

"And butter, *dear*. I promise it shall not be dry bread."

"I prefer a crust, earned like a man."

"You don't mean to say that you won't leave the service to oblige *me, sir*?"

"Anything else you like; but I cannot leave the service."

"Then I can't marry you, my sailor bold," chanted the tyrannical widow, and retired to her cabin.

She told Mrs. Meredith, and that lady scolded her and lectured her till she pouted and was very nearly crying.

However, she vouchsafed an explanation: "One re-

quires change. I have been the slave of one man, and now I *must* be the tyrant of another."

Mrs. Meredith suggested that rational freedom would be a sufficient change from her condition under Laxton.

"Rational freedom!" said the widow, contemptuously; "that is neither one thing nor the other. I will be a slave or a tyrant. He will give in, as he did about the beard, if you don't interfere. I'll be cross one day, and affectionate the next, and all sweetness the next. He will soon find out which he likes best, and he will give in, poor dear fellow!"

I suppose that in a voyage round the world these arts might have conquered; but they sighted the Lizard without Greaves yielding, and both were getting unhappy; so Mrs. Meredith got them together and proposed she should marry him, and if, in one year after marriage, she insisted on his leaving the service he would be bound in honor to do so.

"I am afraid that comes to the same thing," said Greaves.

"No, it does not," said Mrs. Meredith. "Long before a year she will have given up her nonsensical notion that wives can be happy tyrannizing over the man they love, and you will be master."

"Aha!" said Mrs. Laxton; "we shall see."

This being settled, Ellen suddenly appeared with her engaged ring on her finger, and was so loving that Greaves was almost in heaven. They landed Mrs. Meredith with all the honors at Plymouth, and telegraphed the mayor of Tenby. Next day they sailed into the Welsh harbor and landed. They were both received with open arms by the mayor and old Dewar, and it was the happiest house in Wales.

Ellen stayed home; but Greaves lived on board the ship till the wedding-day.

Ellen, still on the doctrine of opposition, would be cried in church, because the last time she had been married by license; and, as she had sailed away from church the first time, she would travel by land, and no farther than St. David's.

They were soon back at Tenby; and she ordered Greaves to take her on board the yacht, with a black leather bag.

"Take that into the cabin, dear," said she.

Then she took some curious keys out of her pocket and opened a secret place that nobody would have discovered. She showed him a great many bags of gold and a pile of bank notes. "We are not so very poor, Arthur," said she. "You will have a little butter to your bread; you know I promised you should. And there is money settled on me; and he left me a great deal of money besides, when he was in his senses, poor fellow! I could not tell before, or papa would have had it settled on me; and that lowers a husband. Being hen-pecked a *very little* — *quite privately* — does not," said she, cajolingly.

Greaves was delighted, within certain limits. "I am glad to find you are rich," said he; "but I hope you won't make me leave the service. Money is not everything."

"I promise never to discharge you from *my* service, dear. I know your value too well."

They spent a happy fortnight in Tenby as man and wife.

One day they walked on the south sands, and somehow found themselves in Merlin's Cave.

Here Ellen sat, with her head on that faithful shoulder and he looking down on her with inexpressible tenderness.

Presently she gave a scream, and started up, and was out of the cavern in a moment. He followed her, a little alarmed. "What is the matter?"

"Oh, Arthur, a dream! Such a dreadful one! I dreamed I played you false, and married a gentleman with a beard, and he was mad, and took me all round the world, and ill-used me, and tied me by the hair, and you rescued me; and then I found, too late, it was you I esteemed and loved, and so we were parted forever. Oh, what a dream! *And* so vivid!"

"How extraordinary!" said he. "Would you believe I dreamed that I lost you in that very way, and was awfully ill, and went to sea again, and found you lashed to a table by your beautiful hair, and lost to me forever."

"Poor Arthur! What a blessing it was only a dream!"

Soon after this little historical arrangement they settled in London; and Mrs. Greaves, being as beautiful as ever, and extremely rich, exerted her powers of pleasing to advance her husband's interests. The consequence is, he remains in the service, but is at present employed in the Education Department. She no longer says he must leave the service; her complaint now is that she loves him too well to govern him properly. But she is firm on this, that, if he takes a command, she shall go with him; and she will do it too.

Her ripe beauty is dazzling; she is known to be rich. The young fellows look from her to her husband, and say, "What on earth could she have seen in that man to marry him?"

I wonder how many of these young swells will vie with him in earnest, and earn a lovely woman both by doing and suffering?

THE HISTORY OF AN ACRE.

1616 A.D. The "Swan Inn," Knightsbridge, with a pigstye of land, and three acres of meadow skirting Hyde Park, was leased by the Freeholder, Agmondisham Muscamp, to Giles Broncham, of Knightsbridge, Wini-fred his wife, and Roger their son; rent £30 a year.

1634 A.D. The same Freeholder leased the above to Richard Callawaie and his son, for their lives; rent, £30 a year.

1671 A.D. The above lease was surrendered, and a new one granted to Richard Callawaie, the younger, for forty-two years; rent, £42.

October 19 and 20, 1674 A.D. The then Freeholder, William Muscamp, Jane his wife, and Ambrose their son, sold the property, subject to Callawaie's lease, and a mortgage of £200, to Richard Portress, Baker and Citizen of London, for £680.

December 5, 1674 A.D. Portress sold to Robert Cole for a trifling profit.

March 17, 1682 A.D. Cole mortgaged the property to Squire Howland, of Streatham, for £200, with forfeiture forever if not redeemed by payment of £212 on or before September 18, 1682. This marks the tightness of money in those days, and the high interest paid on undeniable security. The terms of the forfeiture were

rigorous, and the £212 was not paid; but the mortgagee showed forbearance. He even allowed Cole to divide the security, and sell the odd three acres, in 1684, to Richard Callawaie, for £180. For this sum was then conveyed the site of all the buildings now abutting on Hyde Park, from the "Corner" to opposite Sloane Street, and including, *inter alia*, nearly the whole of Lord Rosebery's site.

July, 1686 A.D. Nicholas Burchade, Goldsmith and Citizen of London, purchased the "Swan" and pightle (subject to Iveson's lease for twenty-one years at £50 a year). He paid to Howland, the patient mortgagee, £239 15s.; to Cole and his wife, £700.

But in less than a year he sold to Edward Billing, Tobacconist, for £602.10s.

Billing may be assumed to have also purchased Callawaie's lot, for though no negotiation either with Burchade or Billing is disclosed in the recitals, Callawaie's interest in the property disappears between 1686 and 1719, and the heirs of Billing are found possessed of the whole property.

1701 A.D. Edward Billing made a will, leaving to his wife the "Swan" and pightle for her life, and this is the first document which defines that property precisely.

July, 1719 A.D. James Billing, of Boston, Carpenter, and Mary his wife, sold to John Clarke, Baker, the entire property for £675, subject to Anne Billing's life-interest in the "Swan."

Some years later, Anne Billing sold her life-interest to Clarke for £29.10s. per annum.

John Clarke was the first to take a right view of this property and its capabilities.

1722 A.D. He granted a building lease for sixty-one years, of the three acres, ground-rents £3 per house.

His successor, Jonathan Clarke, followed suit, and, in 1776 A.D., condemned the "Swan," and granted the materials, the site, and the pightle, on building lease, to Ralph Mills, for a much shorter time than is general nowadays, on condition of his building eighteen houses, one of which to be the Freeholder's, rent free, and Mills paying £59 a year for the other seventeen.

Now in the will of Edward Billing, already referred to, and dated 1701, the "Swan" and its messuages, and its pightle, are described as "lying near *the bridge*, and bounded west by Sir Hugh Vaughan's lands, east by the Lazar-cot, north by the wall of Hyde Park, and south by the King's Highway." I should have called it the Queen's Highway; but you must be born before you can be consulted in trifles. From this document, coupled with the building lease of 1776, we can trace the property to a square foot; the back slum now leading to four houses called "High Row," together with those houses, covers the area of the old "Swan Inn." The houses lately called "Albert Terrace," and numbered correctly, but now called "Albert Gate," and numbered prophetically, are, with their little gardens, the pightle.

The "Swan Inn," condemned in 1776, was demolished in 1778, not 88, as the guide-books say, and the houses rose. The ground-leases were not a bad bargain for the builder, since in 1791 I find his tenants paid him £539 a year; but it was an excellent one for the Freeholder's family — the ground-leases expired, and the last Clarke enjoyed both land and houses gratis. The three acres of meadow had got into Chancery, and were dispersed among little Clarkes and devoured by lawyers.

1830 A.D. The last Clarke died, and left "High Row" and the back slum, erst the "Swan Inn," and the eighteen houses built on the pightle — in two undivided moieties — to a Mr. Franklin, and to his own house-

keeper, Anne Byford. Mrs. Byford was a worthy, prudent woman, from the county Durham, who had put by money, and kept it in an obsolete chimney *more mulierum*. But now, objecting, like most of us, to an undivided moiety, she swept her cold chimney, and with the help of her solicitor and trusty friend, Mr. Charles Hird, she borrowed the needful, and bought Franklin out, and became sole proprietor.

The affair was not rosy at first: the leases were unexpired, the rents low, the footway unpaved. She has told me herself — for we were, for years, on very friendly terms — that she had to trudge through the slush and dirt to apply for her quarterly rents, and often went home crying at the hostile reception or excuses she met, instead of her modest dues. But she held on; she could see the site was admirable; no other houses of this description had gardens running to Hyde Park. Intelligence was flowing westward. Men of substance began to take up every lease at a higher rent, and to lay out thousands of pounds in improvements.

Between 1860 and 1865, ambitious speculators sought noble sites, especially for vast hotels; and one fine day the agent for an enterprising company walked into the office of Mrs. Byford's solicitor, Mr. Charles Hird, Portland Chambers, Titchfield Street, and offered five hundred thousand pounds for "High Row" and "Albert Terrace," with its gardens.

In this offer the houses counted as *débris*: it was an offer for the site of the "Swan" and pightle, which between 1616, the year of Shakespeare's decease, and the date of this munificent offer, had been so leased, and re-leased, and sold, and bandied to and fro, generation after generation, for an old song.

At the date of the above proposal, Mrs. Byford's income from this historical property could not have ex-

ceeded £2,500, and the bid was £20,000 per annum. But a profane Yorkshireman once said to me for my instruction, "Women are kittle cattle to drive;" and so it proved in this case. The property was sacred in that brave woman's heart. It had made her often sorrowful, often glad and hopeful. She had watched it grow, and looked to see it grow more and more. It was her child; and she declined half a million of money for it.

A few years more, and a new customer stepped upon the scene — *Cupidity*.

A first-class builder had his eye upon Albert Terrace and its pretty little gardens running to Hyde Park. Said he to himself: "If I could but get hold of these, how I would *improve* them! I'd pull down these irregular houses, cut up the gardens, and rear 'noble mansions' to command Hyde Park, and be occupied by rank and fashion, not by a scum of artists, authors, physicians, merchants, and mere ladies and gentlemen, who pay their rent and tradesmen, but do not drive four-in-hand."

A circumstance favored this generous design; the Government of the day had been petitioned sore by afflicted householders, to remove the barracks from Knightsbridge to some place with fewer cooks and nursemaids to be corrupted and kitchens pillaged.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer loved economy and hated deficits: so this canny builder ear-wigged him. "If you," said he, "will give us the present site of the condemned barracks, and compulsory sale of 'Albert Terrace,' under a private bill, we will build you new barracks for nothing on any site you choose to give us. It will be *pro bono publico*."

This, as presented *ex parte*, was a great temptation to a public economist; and the statesman inclined his ear to it.

The patriotic project leaked out, and set the "Terrace" in a flutter. After-wit is everybody's wit; but ours had been the forethought to see the value of the sweetest site in London long before aristocrats, and plutocrats, and schemers, and builders; and were our mental inferiors to juggle us out of it on terms quite inadequate to us?

We held meetings, passed resolutions, interested our powerful friends, and sent a deputation, dotted with M.P.'s, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The deputation met with rather a chill reception, and at first buzzed, as deputations will, and took weak ground, and got laid on their backs more than once: but when they urged that the scheme had not occurred to the Government, but had been suggested by a trader—cloaking lucre with public spirit—and named the person, the statesman lost his temper, and they gained their cause. He rose like a tower, and disposed of them in one of those curt sentences that are often uttered by big men, seldom by little deputations. "Enough, gentlemen; you have said all you *can*, and much more than you need have said, or ought to have said, to *me*; you keep yours, and we'll keep ours."

Then he turned his back on them, and that was rude, and has all my sympathy; for is there a more galling, disgusting, unnatural, intolerable thing than to be forced by our own bosom traitors—our justice, our probity, our honor, and our conscience—to hear reason against ourselves?

The deputation went one way, and baffled cupidity another, lamenting the scarcity of patriotism, and the sacrifice of a hundred thousand pounds to such bugbears as Meum and Tuum, and respect for the rights of the weak.

Peace blessed the little Terrace for three or four years, and then

The mouthing patriot with an itching palm,

rendered foxier by defeat, attacked the historical site with admirable craft and plausibility, and a new ally, seldom defeated in this country — Flunkyism.

The first act of the new comedy was played by architects and surveyors. They called on us, and showed us their plans for building “noble mansions” eleven stories high, on the site of our houses and gardens, and hinted at a fair remuneration if we would consent and make way for our superiors. See Ahab’s first proposal to Naboth.

We declined, and the second act commenced. The architects, surveyors, and agents vanished entirely, and the leading actor appeared, with his drawn sword, a private bill. He was a patriot peer, whose estates were in Yorkshire; from that far country came this benevolent being to confer a disinterested boon on the little village of Knightsbridge.

The *bill* was entitled, “Albert Terrace, Knightsbridge, Improvement Act.” It is a masterpiece in its way, and very instructive as a warning to all public men to look keenly and distrustfully below the surface of every private bill.

The preamble stated that the new road, hereinafter described, from the high-road Knightsbridge into Hyde Park, would be of great public and local advantage.

That the Right Honorable Henry Stapleton, Baron Beaumont (hereinafter called the undertaker), was willing to construct the said new road, at his own expense, if authorized to acquire certain lands, buildings, and property for that purpose.

And that this could not be effected without the consent of Parliament.

The *bill*, amidst a number of colorless clauses, slyly inserted that the undertaker of this road (which ought clearly to have been a continuation of Sloane Street straight as a bee-line) might deviate, not eastward into his own property and justice, but westward, like a ram's horn, into the bulk of Anne Byford's houses.

And instead of asking for the unconstitutional power of compulsory purchase, clause ten proposed that the power of compulsory purchase should *not* be exercised after three years from the passing of this Act.

The abuse might be forced on them. Their only anxiety was to guard against the abuse of the abuse.

Briefly, a cannier, more innocent-looking, yet subtle and treacherous composition never emanated from a Machiavelian pen.

It offered something to every class of society: a new public road into the Park, good for the people and the aristocracy; a few private houses that stood in the way, or nearly in the way, of the public road, to be turned into noble mansions, good for the plutocracy and the shop-keepers; and the projector a Peer, good for the national flunkysm.

For the first time I was seriously alarmed, and prepared to fight; for what says Sydney Smith, the wisest as well as wittiest man of his day? "Equal rights to unequal possessions, that is what Englishmen will come out and fight for."

I fired my first shot; wrote on my front wall, in huge letters, NABOTH'S VINEYARD.

The discharge produced a limited effect. I had assumed too hastily that all the world was familiar with that ancient history of personal cupidity and spoliation *pro bono publico*, and would apply it to the modern situ-

ation, with which it had two leading features in common. The deportment of my neighbors surprised me. They stopped, read, scratched their heads, and went away bewildered. I observed their dumb play, and sent my people to catch their comments, if any. Alas! these made it very clear that Knightsbridge thumbs not the archives of Samaria.

One old clo' smiled supercilious, and we always suspected him of applying my text; but it was only suspicion, and counterbalanced by native *naïveté*; a little tradesman was bustling eastward to make money, saw the inscription, stopped a moment, and said to his companion, "Nabob's vinegar! Why, it looks like a gentleman's house."

However, as a Sphinx's riddle, set, by a popular maniac, on a wall, it roused a little of that mysterious interest which still waits upon the unknown, and awakened vague expectation.

Then I prepared my petition to the House, and took grave objection to the bill, with an obsequious sobriety as fictitious as the patriotism of the bill.

But I consoled myself for this unnatural restraint by preparing a little Parliamentary Bill of my own, papered and printed and indorsed in exact imitation of the other bill, only worded on the reverse principle of calling things by their right names. The bill was entitled, "Knightsbridge Spoliation Act," and described as follows:—

A BILL.

For other purposes, under the pretext of a new private carriage drive into the Park, to be called a public road.

THE PREAMBLE.

Whereas the sites of certain houses and gardens, called Albert Terrace, Knightsbridge, are known to be of great value to building speculators, and attempts to appropriate them have

been made from time to time, but have failed for want of the proper varnish ; and whereas the owners of the said sites are merchants, physicians, authors, and commoners, and to transfer their property by force to a speculating lord and his builders would be a great advantage to the said speculators, and also of great local advantage — to an estate in Yorkshire ;

And whereas the trades-people who conceived this bill are builders, architects, and agents, and their names might lack lustre, and even rouse suspicion ; a nobleman, hereinafter described as the “ Patriot Peer,” will represent the shop, and is willing to relieve the rightful owners of the sites afore-named, by compulsory purchase, and to build flats one hundred feet high, and let them to flats at £50 a room, and gain £200,000 clear profit, provided he may construct a new drive into the Park at the cost to himself of £80, or thereabouts, and bear ever after the style and title of “ the Patriot Peer.”

And since great men no longer despoil their neighbors in the name of God, as in the days of King Ahab and Mr. Cromwell, but in the name of the public, it is expedient to dedicate this new carriage drive to the public ; the said drive not to traverse the Park, and no cab, cart, or other vehicle such as the public uses will be allowed to travel on it.

The new drive and the foot-paths together shall be only forty-four feet wide, but whether the foot-paths shall be ten feet, twenty, or thirty, is to be left to the discretion of the private Lawgiver.

As this carriage drive of unlimited narrowness is to be used only by the narrowest class in the kingdom, it shall be dedicated to all classes, and this phraseology shall be often repeated, since reiteration passes with many for truth. The drive, during construction to be called “ Patriot’s Road,” and when finished, “ Oligarch Alley,” or “ Plutocrat Lane.”

And so on, with perfect justice, but a bitterness not worth reviving.

Then for once I deviated from my habits, and appealed in person to leading men in both Houses, who are accessible to me, though I never intrude on them.

Finding me so busy, some friends of the measure, out of good nature, advised me not to waste my valuable time, and proved to me that it was no use. Albert Terrace was an eyesore long recognized; all the trades-people in the district and three hundred ladies and gentlemen of distinction — dukes, earls, marquises, countesses, viscountesses, and ladies — had promised to support the bill with their signatures to a petition.

Flunkysm is mighty in this island. I knew, I trembled, I persisted.

I sounded the nearest Tory member. He would not go into the merits, but said there was a serious objection to the bill as it stood. It would interfere with the Queen's wall.

Unfortunately this was a detail the projectors could alter, and yet trample on such comparative trifles as the law of England and the great rights of little people.

Next I called upon a Liberal — my neighbor, Sir Henry James. I had a slight acquaintance with him through his beating me often at whist, and always at repartee, in a certain club. I now took a mean revenge by begging him to read my papers.

He looked aghast, and hoped they were not long.

"Not so long as your *briefs*," said I, sourly.

Then this master of fence looked away, and muttered, as if in soliloquy, "I'm *paid* for reading *that* rubbish." He added, with a sigh, "There! leave them with me."

The very next morning he invited me to call on him, and I found him completely master of the subject and every detail.

He summed up by saying kindly, "Really I don't wonder at your being indignant, for it is a purely private speculation, and the road is a blind. I think you can defeat it in committee; but that would cost you a good deal of money."

I asked him if it could not be stopped on the road to committee.

He said that was always difficult with private bills.

"However," said he, "if the persons interested are disposed to confide the matter to me, I will see if I can do anything in so clear a case."

You may guess whether I jumped at this or not.

As a proof how these private bills are smuggled through Parliament, it turned out that the bill in question had already been read once, and none of us knew it, and the second reading was coming on in a few days.

Sir Henry James lost no time either. He rose in the House and asked the member for Chelsea whether he was aware of a bill called "Knightsbridge Improvement Acts," and had the Government looked into it.

The honorable member replied that they had, and he would go so far as to say did not approve it.

"Shall you oppose it?" asked Sir Henry James. And as the other did not reply, "Because, if not, we shall." He then gave notice that before this bill was allowed to go into committee he wished to put certain questions to the promoters, and named next Thursday.

Then I lent my humble co-operation by a letter to the "Daily Telegraph," entitled "Private Bills and Public Wrongs."

One unfair advantage of private bills is that their opponents can't get one-tenth part of the House of Commons to be there and discuss them; so this letter of mine was intended as a whip to secure a House at that early hour, when there never is a House, but only a handful, chiefly partisans of the oppressive measure. It had an effect; there were a good many independent members present when Sir Henry James rose to question the promoters of the Knightsbridge Improvement Bill.

He was met in a way that contrasted curiously with

the advice I had received — not to run my head against a stone wall, with three hundred noble signatures written on it. A member instructed by the promoters popped up and anticipated all Sir James's question, with one prudent reply, *The bill is withdrawn.*

Thus fell, by the mere wind of a good lawyer's sword, that impregnable edifice of patriotic spoliation; and Anne Byford, who in this business represented the virtues of the nation, the self-denial and economy which purchase from a willing vender, with Abraham for a precedent, Moses for a guide, and the law of England for a title, and the fortitude which retains, in hard times, till value increases, and cupidity burns to reap where it never sowed, was not juggled out of her child for one-tenth part of the sum she had refused from a straightforward bidder.

So much for the past history of the "Swan" and pigstie. There is more to come, and soon. The projectors of the defeated bill had made large purchases of land close by Albert Terrace, and this was thrown upon their hands at a heavy loss for years. But now I am happy to say they have sold it to the Earl of Rosebery for £120,000, so says report.

Even if they have, what has been will be; in fifty years' time this transaction will be called buying the best site in London for an old song.

Meantime, siege and blockade having failed, a mine is due by all the laws of war. So a new Metropolitan Company proposes this very year to run under the unfortunate terrace, propel the trains with a patent that, like all recent patents, will often be out of order, and stop them with another patent that will seldom be *in* order. Item, to stifle and smash the public a good deal more than they are smashed and stifled at present (which seems superfluous); the motive, public spirit, as before;

the instrument, a private bill — *Anathema sit in sæcula sæculorum*.

While the moles are at work below, Lord Rosebery will rear “a noble mansion;” by that expression every builder and every snob in London means a pile of stucco, huge and hideous.

Then flunkysism will say, “Are a peer and his palace to be shouldered by cribs?” and cupidity will demand a line of “noble mansions,” and no garden, in place of Albert Terrace and its pretty gardens — a *rus in urbe* a thousand times more beautiful and a hundred thousand times more rare, whatever idiots, snobs, builders, and beasts may think, than monotonous piles of stucco — and that engine of worse than Oriental despotism, the private bill, will be ready to hand. The rest is in the womb of time.

But my pages are devoted to the past, not to the doubtful future. What I have related is the documentary, pecuniary, political, and private history of the “Swan” and pightle. Now many places have a long prosaic history, and a short romantic one. The chronic history of Waterloo field is to be ploughed, and sowed, and reaped, and mowed: yet once in a way these acts of husbandry were diversified with a great battle, where hosts decided the fate of empires. After that, agriculture resumed its sullen sway, and even heroes submitted, and fattened the field their valor had glorified.

Second-rate horses compete, every year, on Egham turf, and will while the turf endures. But one day the competing horses on that sward were a King and his Barons, and they contended over the constitution, and the cup was Magna Charta. This double history belongs to small places as well as great, to Culloden and Agincourt, and to the narrow steps leading from Berkeley Street to Curzon Street, Mayfair, down which, with head

lowered to his saddle bow, the desperate Turpin spurred his horse, with the Bow Street runners on each side; but no man ever did it before, nor will again.

Even so, amidst all these prosaic pamphlets and papers, leases and releases, mortgages, conveyances, and testaments, ignoring so calmly every incident not bearing on title, there happened within the area of the "Swan" and its pightle a romantic story, which I hope will reward my friends who have waded through my prose: for, besides some minor attractions, it is a tale of Blood.



